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IN PREPARATION.

THE

LETTERS AND LITERARY REMAINS

OF

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN.

TRANSLATED BY

E. THORNTON FISHER.

Uniform with this Volume.

THE JOURNAL

OF

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN

WITH AN ESSAY BY MATTHEW ARNOLD,
AND A MEMOIR BY SAINTE-BEUVE

EDITED BY

G. S. TREBUTIEN

TRANSLATED BY

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ESSAY

ON

THE LIFE AND GENIUS

OF

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN,

BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

I WILL not presume to say that I now know the French language well; but at a time when I knew it even less well than at present,—some fifteen years ago,—I remember pestering those about me with this sentence, the rhythm of which had lodged itself in my head, and which, with the strangest pronunciation possible, I kept perpetually declaiming: "Les dieux jaloux ont enfoui quelque part les témoignages de la descendance des choses; mais au bord de quel Océan ont ils roulé la pierre qui les couvre, ô Macarée!"

These words come from a short composition called

the *Centaur*, of which the author, Georges-Maurice de Guérin, died in the year 1839, at the age of twenty-eight, without having published anything. In 1840, Madame Sand brought out the *Centaur* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, with a short notice of its author, and a few extracts from his letters. A year or two afterwards she reprinted these at the end of a volume of her novels; and there it was that I fell in with them. I was so much struck with the *Centaur* that I waited anxiously to hear something more of its author, and of what he had left; but it was not till the other day—twenty years after the first publication of the *Centaur* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*—that my anxiety was satisfied. At the end of 1860 appeared two volumes with the title, *Maurice de Guérin, Reliquiæ*, containing the *Centaur*, several poems of Guérin, his journals, and a number of his letters, collected and edited by a devoted friend, M. Trebutien, and preceded by a notice of Guérin by the first of living critics, M. Sainte-Beuve.

The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power; by which I mean, not a power of drawing out in black and white an explanation of the mystery of the universe, but the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new, and intimate sense of them, and of our relations with them. When this sense is awakened in us, as to objects without us, we feel ourselves to be in contact with the essential nature of those objects, to be no longer bewildered and oppressed by them, but to have their secret, and to be in harmony with them; and this feeling calms and satisfies us as no other can. Poetry, indeed, interprets in another way besides this; but one of its two ways of interpreting, of exercising its highest power, is by awakening this sense

in us. I will not now inquire whether this sense is illusive, whether it can be proved not to be illusive, whether it does absolutely make us possess the real nature of things; all I say is, that poetry can awaken it in us, and that to awaken it is one of the highest powers of poetry. The interpretations of science do not give us this intimate sense of objects as the interpretations of poetry give it; they appeal to a limited faculty, and not to the whole man. It is not Linnæus, or Cavendish, or Cuvier who gives us the true sense of animals, or water, or plants, who seizes their secret for us, who makes us participate in their life; it is Shakespeare, with his

> "daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty";

it is Wordsworth, with his

> "voice . . . . heard
> In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
> Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides";

it is Keats, with his

> "moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of cold ablution round Earth's human shores";

it is Chateaubriand, with his "*âme indéterminée des forêts*"; it is Senancour, with his mountain birch-tree: "*Cette écorce blanche, lisse et crevassée; cette tige agreste; ces branches qui s'inclinent vers la terre; la mobilité des feuilles, et tout cet abandon, simplicité de la nature, attitude des déserts.*"

Eminent manifestations of this magical power of

poetry are very rare and very precious; the compositions of Guérin manifest it, I think, in singular eminence. Not his poems, strictly so called—his verse,—so much as his prose; his poems in general take for their vehicle that favorite metre of French poetry, the Alexandrine; and, in my judgment, I confess they have thus, as compared with his prose, a great disadvantage to start with. In prose, the character of the vehicle for the composer's thoughts is not determined beforehand; every composer has to make his own vehicle; and who has ever done this more admirably than the great prose-writers of France,—Pascal, Bossuet, Fénelon, Voltaire? But in verse the composer has (with comparatively narrow liberty of modification) to accept his vehicle ready-made; it is therefore of vital importance to him that he should find at his disposal a vehicle adequate to convey the highest matters of poetry. We may even get a decisive test of the poetical power of a language and nation by ascertaining how far the principal poetical vehicle which they have employed, how far (in plainer words) the established national metre for high poetry, is adequate or inadequate. It seems to me that the established metre of this kind in France—the Alexandrine—is inadequate; that as a vehicle for high poetry it is greatly inferior to the hexameter or to the iambics of Greece, (for example,) or to the blank verse of England. Therefore the man of genius who uses it is at a disadvantage as compared with the man of genius who has for conveying his thoughts a more adequate vehicle, metrical or not. Racine is at a disadvantage as compared with Sophocles or Shakespeare, and he is likewise at a disadvantage as compared with Bossuet. The same may be said of our own poets of the eighteenth century, a century which gave them as

the main vehicle for their high poetry a metre inadequate (as much as the French Alexandrine, and nearly in the same way) for this poetry,—the ten-syllable couplet. It is worth remarking, that the English poet of the eighteenth century whose compositions wear best and give one the most entire satisfaction,—Gray,—does not use that couplet at all; this abstinence, however, limits Gray's productions to a few short compositions, and (exquisite as these are) he is a poetical nature repressed and without free issue. For English poetical production on a great scale, for an English poet deploying all the forces of his genius, the ten-syllable couplet was, in the eighteenth century, the established, one may almost say the inevitable, channel. Now this couplet, admirable (as Chaucer uses it) for story-telling not of the epic pitch, and often admirable for a few lines even in poetry of a very high pitch, is for continuous use in poetry of this latter kind inadequate. Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, is thus at a disadvantage compared with Lucretius in his poem on Nature: Lucretius has an adequate vehicle, Pope has not. Nay, though Pope's genius for didactic poetry was not less than that of Horace, while his satirical power was certainly greater, still one's taste receives, I cannot but think, a certain satisfaction when one reads the Epistles and Satires of Horace, which it fails to receive when one reads the Satires and Epistles of Pope. Of such avail is the superior adequacy of the vehicle used to compensate even an inferiority of genius in the user! In the same way Pope is at a disadvantage as compared with Addison: the best of Addison's composition (the "Coverley Papers" in the *Spectator*, for instance) wears better than the best of Pope's, because Addison has in his prose an intrinsically better vehicle for his genius

than Pope in his couplet. But Bacon has no such advantage over Shakespeare; nor has Milton, writing prose (for no contemporary English prose-writer must be matched with Milton except Milton himself), any such advantage over Milton writing verse: indeed, the advantage here is all the other way.

It is in the prose remains of Guérin,—his journals, his letters, and the striking composition which I have already mentioned, the *Centaur*,—that his extraordinary gift manifests itself. He has a truly interpretative faculty; the most profound and delicate sense of the life of Nature, and the most exquisite felicity in finding expressions to render that sense. To all who love poetry, Guérin deserves to be something more than a name; and I shall try, in spite of the impossibility of doing justice to such a master of expression by translations, to make my English readers see for themselves how gifted an organization his was, and how few artists have received from Nature a more magical faculty of interpreting her.*

* * * * * *

In few natures, however, is there really such essential consistency as in Guérin's. He says of himself, in the very beginning of his journal: "I owe everything to poetry, for there is no other name to give to the sum total of my thoughts; I owe to it whatever I now have pure, lofty, and solid in my soul; I owe to it all my consolations in the past; I shall probably owe to it my future." Poetry, the poetical instinct, was indeed the

* Here and elsewhere, where breaks are marked by asterisks, the American editor has taken the liberty of omitting from Professor Arnold's essay passages which would be superfluous in a volume containing De Guérin's Journal.

basis of his nature; but to say so thus absolutely is not quite enough. One aspect of poetry fascinated Guérin's imagination and held it prisoner. Poetry is the interpretress of the natural world, and she is the interpretress of the moral world; it was as the interpretress of the natural world that she had Guérin for her mouthpiece. To make magically near and real the life of Nature, and man's life only so far as it is a part of that Nature, was his faculty; a faculty of naturalistic, not of moral interpretation. This faculty always has for its basis a peculiar temperament, an extraordinary delicacy of organization and susceptibility to impressions; in exercising it the poet is in a great degree passive (Wordsworth thus speaks of a *wise passiveness*); he aspires to be a sort of human Æolian-harp, catching and rendering every rustle of Nature. To assist at the evolution of the whole life of the world is his craving, and intimately to feel it all:

> "the glow, the thrill of life,
> Where, where do these abound?"

is what he asks: he resists being riveted and held stationary by any single impression, but would be borne on forever down an enchanted stream. He goes into religion and out of religion, into society and out of society, not from the motives which impel men in general, but to feel what it is all like; he is thus hardly a moral agent, and, like the passive and ineffectual Uranus of Keats's poem, he may say:

> "I am but a voice;
> My life is but the life of winds and tides;
> No more than winds and tides can I avail."

He hovers over the tumult of life, but does not really put his hand to it.

No one has expressed the aspirations of this temperament better than Guérin himself.

* * * * * *

Assuredly it is not in this temperament that the active virtues have their rise. On the contrary, this temperament, considered in itself alone, indisposes for the discharge of them. Something morbid and excessive, as manifested in Guérin, it undoubtedly has. In him, as in Keats, and as in another youth of genius, whose name, but the other day unheard of, Lord Houghton has so gracefully written in the history of English poetry,—David Gray,—the temperament, the talent itself, is deeply influenced by their mysterious malady; the temperament is *devouring;* it uses vital power too hard and too fast, paying the penalty in long hours of unutterable exhaustion and in premature death. The intensity of Guérin's depression is described to us by Guérin himself with the same incomparable touch with which he describes happier feelings; far oftener than any pleasurable sense of his gift he has "the sense profound, near, immense, of my misery, of my inward poverty." And again: "My inward misery gains upon me; I no longer dare look within." And on another day of gloom he does look within, and here is the terrible analysis:

"Craving, unquiet, seeing only by glimpses, my spirit is stricken by all those ills which are the sure fruit of a youth doomed never to ripen into manhood. I grow old and wear myself out in the most futile mental strainings, and make no progress. My head seems dying, and when the wind blows I fancy I feel it, as if I were a tree, blowing through a number of withered branches in my top. Study is intolerable to me, or rather it is quite out of my

power. Mental work brings on, not drowsiness, but an irritable and nervous disgust which drives me out, I know not where, into the streets and public places. The Spring, whose delights used to come every year stealthily and mysteriously to charm me in my retreat, crushes me this year under a weight of sudden hotness. I should be glad of any event which delivered me from the situation in which I am. If I were free I would embark for some distant country where I could begin life anew."

Such is this temperament in the frequent hours when the sense of its own weakness and isolation crushes it to the ground. Certainly it was not for Guérin's happiness, or for Keats's, as men count happiness, to be as they were. Still the very excess and predominance of their temperament has given to the fruits of their genius an unique brilliancy and flavor. I have said that poetry interprets in two ways; it interprets by expressing with magical felicity the physiognomy and movement of the outward world, and it interprets by expressing, with inspired conviction, the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature. In other words, poetry is interpretative both by having *natural magic* in it, and by having *moral profundity*. In both ways it illuminates man: it gives him a satisfying sense of reality; it reconciles him with himself and the universe. Thus Æschylus's "δράσαντι παθεῖν" and his "ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα" are alike interpretative. Shakespeare interprets both when he says,

> "Full many a glorious morning have I seen,
> Flatter the mountain-tops with sovran eye";

and when he says,

> "There 's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them as we will."

These great poets unite in themselves the faculty of both kinds of interpretation, the naturalistic and the moral. But it is observable that in the poets who unite both kinds, the latter (the moral) usually ends by making itself the master. In Shakespeare the two kinds seem wonderfully to balance one another; but even in him the balance leans; his expression tends to become too little sensuous and simple, too much intellectualized. The same thing may be yet more strongly affirmed of Lucretius and of Wordsworth. In Shelley there is not a balance of the two gifts, nor even a co-existence of them, but there is a passionate straining after them both, and this is what makes Shelley, as a man, so interesting. I will not now inquire how much Shelley achieves as a poet, but whatever he achieves, he in general fails to achieve natural magic in his expression; in Mr. Palgrave's charming *Treasury* may be seen a gallery of his failures.* But in Keats and Guérin, in whom the faculty of naturalistic interpretation is overpoweringly predominant, the natural magic is perfect; when they speak of the world they speak like Adam naming by divine inspiration the creatures; their expression corresponds with the thing's essential reality. Even between Keats and Guérin, however, there is a distinction to be drawn. Keats has, above all, a sense of what is pleasurable and

* Compare, for example, his "Lines Written in the Euganean Hills," with Keats's "Ode to Autumn" (*Golden Treasury*, pp. 256, 284). The latter piece *renders* Nature; the former *tries to render* her. I will not deny, however, that Shelley has natural magic in his rhythm; what I deny is, that he has it in his language. It always seems to me that the right sphere for Shelley's genius was the sphere of music, not of poetry; the medium of sounds he can master, but to master the more difficult medium of words he has neither intellectual force enough nor sanity enough.

open in the life of Nature; for him she is the *Alma Parens:* his expression has, therefore, more than Guérin's, something genial, outward, and sensuous. Guérin has above all a sense of what there is adorable and secret in the life of Nature; for him she is the *Magna Parens:* his expression has, therefore, more than Keats's, something mystic, inward, and profound.

So he lived like a man possessed; with his eye not on his own career, not on the public, not on fame, but on the Isis whose veil he had uplifted. He published nothing: "There is more power and beauty," he writes, "in the well-kept secret of one's self and one's thoughts, than in the display of a whole heaven that one may have inside one." "My spirit," he answers the friends who urge him to write, "is of the home-keeping order, and has no fancy for adventure; literary adventure is above all distasteful to it; for this, indeed (let me say so without the least self-sufficiency), it has a contempt. The literary career seems to me unreal, both in its own essence and in the rewards which one seeks from it, and therefore fatally marred by a secret absurdity." His acquaintances, and among them distinguished men of letters, full of admiration for the originality and delicacy of his talent, laughed at his self-depreciation, warmly assured him of his powers. He received their assurances with a mournful incredulity, which contrasts curiously with the self-assertion of poor David Gray, whom I just now mentioned. "It seems to me intolerable," he writes, "to appear to men other than one appears to God. My worst torture at this moment is the over-estimate which generous friends form of me. We are told that at the last judgment the secret of all consciences will be laid bare to the universe; would that mine were so this day,

and that every passer-by could see me as I am!" "High above my head," he says at another time, "far, far away, I seem to hear the murmur of that world of thought and feeling to which I aspire so often, but where I can never attain. I think of those of my own age who have wings strong enough to reach it, but I think of them without jealousy, and as men on earth contemplate the elect and their felicity." And, criticising his own composition, "When I begin a subject, my self-conceit" (says this exquisite artist) "imagines I am doing wonders; and when I have finished, I see nothing but a wretched made-up imitation, composed of odds and ends of color stolen from other people's pallets, and tastelessly mixed together on mine." Such was his *passion for perfection*, his disdain for all poetical work not perfectly adequate and felicitous. The magic of expression to which by the force of this passion he won his way, will make the name of Maurice de Guérin remembered in literature.*

* * * * * *

* The remainder of Professor Arnold's essay would needlessly anticipate matter to be contained in the volume of Letters and Literary Remains of Maurice de Guérin.

PREFACE

TO

THE ORIGINAL EDITION,

BY

G. S. TREBUTIEN.

I SHALL write only a few lines at the beginning of this volume. The collection and arrangement of the material have been done by me: but it is not my province to speak of the author. I will here merely say that at a time already distant, I knew Maurice de Guérin; I loved him, and lived with him in an intimacy which is the honor of my life, and to-day my chief joy.

The friends of Maurice have always regarded the publication of his manuscripts as a duty lending lustre to their own reputation. This publication, so ardently desired, especially by his sister Eugénie, has been suspended, owing to the delay of circumstances not worth recalling, and which seem to have been in a manner providential. At last it sees the light, and under most

happy auspices. M. Sainte-Beuve, who for a long time had been taking a sympathetic interest in the matter, hastened to announce it in the *Moniteur Universel*, and, with courtesy which is highly prized, has allowed me to reproduce the fine sketch dedicated by him to the author of The Centaur. A name of such weight as his, placed on the title page of the book, not merely augurs success; it makes success certain.

The greater part of the fragments which I publish were in the possession of the friends of Guérin, who fairly groaned in the knowledge that these fragments were scattered like unknown diamonds, soon perhaps to be lost. To me they have entrusted them, through a choice which I have felt bound to recognize by laboring with all my might to restore them these treasures reunited and forever saved. They were inestimable relics, for which they made it my duty to prepare a shrine. And here let me say that I have put into the execution of this sacred task, which I regard as my mission here below, whatever there was best in me: conscientiousness, scrupulous care, self-devotion, and complete and living faith in the talent now consecrated by death. Some years since, I visited the Valley of Arguenon in Brittany, whence Maurice dated his finest inspirations. I wished to see the places where he passed his happiest days, the sea of which he sang, all the objects over which he poured his spirit, and where I was desirous to mingle somewhat of my own. If circumstances incidental and personal have caused me to find the bitter drop mysteriously hidden at the bottom of the sweetest cups, I am doubly repaid by the consciousness of having accomplished the supreme desire of Eugénie, dead before the day for which she waited, and by the pride I take (a

pride from which I cannot defend myself) in placing at the beginning of Guérin's works, and under his name, this signature of friendship and remembrance.

G. S. TREBUTIEN.

CAEN LIBRARY, *November* 28, 1860.

POSTSCRIPT. *November* 30, 1861.—Just a year since the editor of Maurice de Guérin wrote the preceding lines. The brief interval of a year has sufficed to justify his anticipations and crown a success which has even surpassed his hopes.

In prefacing this new edition, he had intended only to record an acknowledgment of his gratitude for those friendly voices which have contributed, through the Paris press, to awaken public curiosity, and render familiar to all a name which the publication of THE CENTAUR, and Madame Sand's article had, twenty years before, endeared to a few. Unfortunately, there remains the discharge of a more delicate duty.

Criticism, unanimous in recognizing the original talent of Maurice de Guérin, was divided in seeking to determine the philosophic and religious ideas which had been the source of his poetical inspiration. On this point, the contest, traces of which we have not been allowed wholly to efface from this volume, has been sufficiently lively to alarm the sensitive conscience of a tender and pious sister, the faithful custodian of the reputation of her family, but even more firmly attached to the faith which was equally that of all her household. In order to forestall the secret wish of Mlle. Marie de Guérin, and for the mere sake of truth, M. A. Raynaud, a relative, who was Maurice's best friend, and in a manner his second father, beseeches M. de Marzan, as well as ourselves, "to

present this Christian figure clear of every mist of unbelief and irreligion."

We desire to fulfil a promise, which to us is sacred, without being accused of renewing a discussion which at any cost we would gladly have prevented, and even now wish to close. Against the opinion of these writers, whose sincerity, for the matter of that, we respect, and for whose interest in a memoir which they professed, after their fashion, to honor, we are duly grateful, we shall not set up our individual opinion. It will suffice to summon two witnesses whose testimony in our view of the matter, is decisive.

One is Guérin himself.

One evening in the month of December, 1833, he was reading to his friends at the Valley of Arguenon some passages from his Green Note-book. Struck with certain vague expressions, M. de Marzan called Maurice's attention to them :

"That is a grand idea," said he, "and undoubtedly Christian at bottom ; but in the form of expression there mingles, nevertheless, a marked tone of naturalism which the pantheistic school could perhaps interpret to their advantage."

The narrator thus continues :

"To my remark, so entirely unexpected, Guérin replied at first by that involuntary smile to which the sudden thought of an improbable thing always gives rise ; but seeing that I insisted, he readily vindicated himself from the least suspicion of pantheism, and protested that the passage meant this, and nothing more ; that the heart of man was the point of union between heaven and earth, and, as it were, the *rendezvous*, in humanity, of God and man."

And Maurice offered, moreover, if he were mistaken, to give up the point.

A voice issuing from the tomb, or rather descending from heaven, will put an end to these discussions. Doubts which the Journal of Maurice de Guérin might leave on the mind, that of his sister Eugénie will easily scatter. That touching oneness of feeling between brother and sister people will believe. The truth is, that during the three years preceding Guérin's marriage his faith was lukewarm. At this time the progress of his indifference can be noted. Nowhere can you find unbelief. Lover and poet of Nature as he was, he had never ceased to be Christian. The account of his last moments will forbid our forgetting in what quarter his heart sought for hope, and his soul for truth. On the threshold of immortality, he had only to retire within himself, there to find again, without effort and with joy supreme, a faith which had slept at intervals, but which had never been quenched.

A few words only on this second edition. We have been able to revise the original manuscripts, with the greater part of the letters, of which we previously had only the copies made by Chopin—precious copies, and for the most part exact, in which, nevertheless, we have retrieved some errors and restored some undesirable gaps.

It is possible the text has thus been improved in several passages. But our greatest happiness has been to add to the fragments published last year nearly thirty new letters, and La Bacchante—a curious piece of composition in the style of The Centaur, the idea of which, like that, came to Guérin in one of those visits which we used occasionally to make to the *Musée des Antiques*.

These additions make our collection complete, with the exception of some verses which we have been compelled to sacrifice, of a small number of letters which were not at our disposal, or which were of those whose confidential character Madame Sand has already regretted did not allow of their being wholly transcribed. As regards everything bordering on the domestic details of life, there are limits where the most legitimate curiosity should pause.

We can, therefore, hope that our mission is fulfilled, and it is with a feeling of profound acknowledgment that we give thanks to God for having left us the time and strength necessary to conduct to a close the pious task we had undertaken, and which, spite of many difficulties, we have pursued in sorrow and love.—G. S. T.

MEMOIR

OF

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN,

BY

M. SAINTE BEUVE.

ON the fifteenth of May, 1840, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* published an article of George Sand on a young poet whose name was entirely unknown up to that time—GEORGES-MAURICE DE GUÉRIN, who had died the preceding year, on the nineteenth of July, 1839, aged twenty-nine years. What secured him the posthumous honor of being thus suddenly classed, with the rank of a star, among the poets of France, was a magnificent and singular composition, THE CENTAUR, in which all the original forces of the natural man were felt, expressed, energetically personified, always with taste and moderation, and which showed at once the hand of a master—"the André Chénier of pantheism," as a friend had already named him.

Around this colossal piece of antique marble, frag-

ments quoted from letters, outpourings which revealed a tender and beautiful soul, formed, as it were, a charming group, partially veiled, of half confidences; and glimpses caught in passing created an eager desire for the rest. There was from that time among the young a little chosen school, a scattered band of admirers, who named the name of Guérin, who rallied around this youthful memory, reverenced it with secret fervor, and longed for the moment which should yield them the finished work—when the entire soul should be disclosed to them. Twenty years have since slipped away, and difficulties, objections, scruples, of every kind and of the most delicate nature, had delayed the fulfilment of the vow consecrated to art by friendship. Guérin had already had time to be imitated by other poets, who seemed quite unconscious of this imitation, and his own works had not been published and brought to light. In the interval, however, five years after, appeared, with the reservation, at first, of a partial publicity, the *Reliques* of a sister of the poet, Eugénie de Guérin, his equal, if not his superior in talent and soul. The desire finally to know and possess the complete works of the brother was thereby increased, and, as it were, stimulated. We are happy to announce that they are about to appear; faithful friends have selected and prepared the material; and the learned and poetical antiquary, M. Trebutien, devoting his attention to it as a fervent monk of the middle ages would have done to the writing and illuminating of a holy missal, the treasure of his abbey, has procured their publication.

Nothing was exaggerated in the first impression received in 1840; everything is to-day justified and confirmed; the modern school, in fact, counts one poet, one landscape-painter the more. I must first refer him to

his true epoch, to his real beginnings. It was in 1833 that Maurice de Guérin, who was then only in his twenty-third year, began to develop and expand in the circle of friendship that first flower of sentiment, which has at length been exhibited to us, and which is to yield us all its perfume. Born on the fifth of August, 1810, he belonged to that second generation of the century, which was no longer *two* or *three*, but ten or eleven years old when it produced that new flock, the Mussets, the Montalemberts, the Guérins ;—I purposely write these names together. Born under the beautiful sky of the South, of an ancient family, noble and poor, Maurice de Guérin, a dreamer from his childhood, turned early toward religious ideas, and inclined, without effort, to the thought of the ecclesiastical profession. He was not yet twelve, when, in the early days of January, 1822, he left for the first time—poor exiled bird !—his turrets of Cayla, and arrived at Toulouse, to carry on his studies,—I believe, at the little seminary. He came to Paris to complete them, at Stanislas College. It was on his departure from there, after having hesitated some time, after having returned to his family and seen his sisters and their friends, that, disturbed, sensitive, and even, it is suspected, secretly wounded, he went to La Chênaie to seek repose, forgetfulness, rather than to carry thither the religious vocation, already a well-travelled profession, and very uncertain.

He had loved, he had wept and sung his sorrows during a season passed in his beautiful South, the last before his departure for La Chênaie. Witness these verses, dated at La Roche d'Onelle, which refer to the autumn of 1832 :

The delving ages, o'er this wrinkled steep,
Deep clefts have worn, where raindrops, nestling, sleep ;
And passing birds here stay their evening flight,
To drink with eager beak this pure delight.
But to Onella's rock I come, forlorn,
The broken spell of my first love to mourn ;
Here breaks my suffering heart, here rains its tears,
Whose gathered flow the channelled rock upbears ;
Then hover not, ye passing doves, too near ;
This water shun—'tis bitter with a tear.

A young Greek, a disciple of Theocritus or Moschus, could not have spoken better than this young Levite who seemed in search of an apostle.

He arrived at La Chênaie at the beginning of winter ; he was there on Christmas, 1832 ; he had found his asylum. La Chênaie, "that species of oasis in the midst of the steppes of Brittany," where, in front of the castle, stretches a vast garden, cut by a terrace planted with lindens, with a little chapel at the back, was the retreat of M. de Lamennais, of M. *Féli* (as he was familiarly called) ; and he was accustomed to have about him four or five young persons, who, in this country life, prosecuted their studies zealously, in a spirit of piety, of contemplation, and of generous liberty. The period at which Guérin arrived there was one of the most memorable, one of the most decisive for the master ; this we may say with certainty and precision, to-day, when we have read the private correspondence of Lamennais during this time. This great, impetuous soul, which could rest only in extreme solutions, after having attempted the public union of Catholicism and Democracy, and preached it in his journal in the tone of a prophet, had been obliged to suspend the publication of *l'Avenir*. He had made the journey to Rome to consult the supreme

authority; he had returned, personally well-treated, but very clearly disapproved of, and had appeared to submit. Perhaps he thought himself sincerely submissive, even while already meditating and revolving thoughts of vengeance and reprisal. M. de Lamennais, who is all one thing or all another, without any medium, exhibited the strangest contrast in his double nature. At one time, and often, he had what Buffon, speaking of beasts of prey, has called a *soul of wrath;* again, and no less often, he had a sweetness, a tenderness captivating to little children, a spirit altogether charming; and he passed from one to the other in an instant. The veil which has since been torn away, and which has exposed the stormy and shifting foundation of his doctrines, had then hardly been raised. None of those who knew and loved M. de Lamennais, in those years of painful passion and of crisis, have been obliged, from any point of view, it seems to me, to blush for or repent of that love.

He had attempted a union—impossible, I admit—but the most dignified, the best calculated to please noble hearts and generous and religious imaginations. Warned that he was mistaken, and that he was not acknowledged, he halted before the obstacle, he bowed before the sentence: he suffered, he was silent, he prayed. When he was closely observed at times, one would have said that he was at the point of death. One day (the twenty-fourth of March, 1833), sitting behind the chapel, under the two Scotch firs which stood in this spot, he had taken his stick and drawn a tomb on the sward, saying to one of his disciples who was near him: "'Tis there I wish to lie; but no monumental stone—a simple mound of turf. O! how happy I shall be there!" If he had died, indeed, at this moment, or in the months which followed;

if he had succumbed in his internal struggle, what a fair and spotless memory would he have left! What a renown, as disciple, as hero, and even as martyr! What a mysterious subject of meditation and of reverie for those who love to dwell upon great destinies interrupted!

But we have nothing to do with him here except in his relations to Maurice de Guérin. Admirer and proselyte as he then was, the latter was to submit only in passing to the influence of Lamennais. A year or two later, he was entirely emancipated and delivered from it. Whether he freed himself by degrees from the faith, whether he allowed himself gradually to be won by the spirit of the age, it was not in the train of the great apostate, but after his own fashion, and he erred in a path of his own. In 1835 he was no longer the disciple of any person nor of any system. After three years of an independent and thoroughly Parisian life, at the approach of death, his friends had the consolation of seeing him reembrace Christianity.

But if his emancipation was to take place through the intellect, he still belonged fundamentally to the world of La Chênaie through his sensibility, through profound impressions, through the first and unmistakable tokens of talent; so that, in the literary perspective of the past, he comes, although separate, to take a place as one figure in the frame; there he belongs, and there in future he will remain, the landscape-painter, the artist, the true poet. By the side of the dazzling names of Montalembert, of Lacordaire, which resounded abroad like trumpets, there was—who would have believed it?—in that silent and peaceful house, an obscure, timid young man, whom Lamennais, abstracted in his apocalyptic social visions, never distinguished from the others; to

whom he gave credit for only ordinary powers, and who, at the same time when his master was forging on his anvil those thunderbolts called *Les Paroles d'un Croyant*, was himself writing personal pages far more natural, fresher—why not say, more beautiful?—pages calculated ever to thrill souls enamored of that universal life which exhales and breathes in the heart of the woods, on the shores of the sea.

Guérin arrived at La Chênaie in winter, in the depth of the dead season, when everything is stripped, when the forests are of a *rust-color*, under that sky of Brittany which is always cloudy, "and so low that it seems ready to crush you;" but let spring come, *the sky lifts*, the woods renew their life, and all smiles again. The winter, however, is slow to depart; the young and loving observer notes in his journal its tardy flight, its frequent returns:

"*March 3d.*—The hours of to-day have enchanted me. The sun, for the first time in many days, has shown himself in all his radiant beauty. He has unfolded the buds of the leaves and flowers, and awakened in my bosom a thousand tender thoughts.

"The clouds resume their light and graceful shapes, and sketch the blue with charming fancies. The woods have not yet their leaves; but they take on I know not what spirited and joyful air, which gives them an entirely new face. Everything is preparing for the great holiday of Nature."

This holiday, revealing tantalizing glimpses, tarries; many stormy days still intervene. All this is observed, painted, and, above all, felt; this young child of the South draws from some indescribable native sadness a special instinct for understanding and loving, from the

first, the nature of this North, neighbor of the tempest.

"*March 8th.*—A snowy day. A southeast wind curls the snow in eddies, in great whirls of a dazzling whiteness. It melts as it falls. Here we are transported, as it were, into the heart of winter, after a few spring smiles. The wind is cold enough; the little singing-birds, newcomers, shiver, and the flowers, too. The chinks of the partitions and sashes wail as in January; and I, in my poor wrapper, shrink into myself like Nature.

"*9th.*—More snow, hail, blasts, cold. Poor Brittany, thou sorely needest a little verdure to brighten thy sombre face. Oh! doff quickly, then, thy hooded winter cloak, and let me see thee take thy light garment of spring, tissue of leaves and flowers. When shall I behold the skirts of thy robe fluttering at the will of the winds?

"*11th.*—It has snowed all night. My shutters, poorly fastened, allowed me glimpses, as soon as I rose, of that great sheet of white which had been silently spread over the fields. The black trunks of the trees rise like columns of ebony from the ivory-paved court of a temple; this severe and sharp contrast, and a certain dejected manner in the woods, make one very sad. Naught is heard; not a living thing, save a few sparrows, who take refuge, peeping as they go, in the fir-trees that stretch their long arms laden with snow. The interior of these bushy trees is impervious to frost; it is a shelter prepared by Providence; the little birds know it well.

"I have visited our primroses: each was bearing its little burden of snow, and bending its head under the weight. These pretty flowers, so richly colored, presented a charming effect under their white hoods. I saw

whole tufts of them covered with a single block of snow; all these laughing flowers, thus veiled, and leaning the one against the other, seemed like a group of young girls overtaken by a shower, and getting to shelter under a white apron."

This recalls Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Guérin, without any design, spontaneously, and by the affinity of talent, is of his school. At this very time he was finishing the perusal of his *Études de la Nature*, and fresh from the flavor of its charm: "It is one of those books we wish would never end. There is little to be gained from it for science, but much for poetry, for the elevation of the soul, and the contemplation of Nature. This book sets free and enlightens a faculty which we all have, however veiled, vague, and almost totally bereft of energy; the faculty which gathers the beauty of Nature, and hands it over to the soul." And he dwells upon this second work of reflecting, which spiritualizes, which blends and harmonizes into unity and subordinates to one idea the actual features, once brought together. This is precisely his own method: in the faithful pictures of Nature which he offers us, man, the soul, is always in the foreground: it is life reflected and interpreted by life. His slightest sketches have thus their meaning and their charm.

"19*th* (*March*).—Took a walk in the forest of Coëtquen. Happened upon a place remarkable for its wildness: the road descends with a sudden pitch into a little ravine, where flows a little brook over a slaty bed, which gives its waters a blackish hue, disagreeable at first, but which ceases to be so when you have noted its harmony with the black trunks of the old oaks, the sombre verdure of the ivies, and its contrast with the white and

glossy limbs of the birches. A strong north wind swept through the forest, and caused it to utter deep roarings. The trees, under the buffets of the wind, struggled like madmen. Through the branches we saw the clouds, flying rapidly in black and grotesque masses, and seeming lightly to graze the tops of the trees. This great, gloomy, floating veil, showed rents here and there, through which glided a ray of sunshine, which fell like a flash of lightning into the bosom of the forest. These sudden passages of light gave to the majestic depths of shade a haggard and weird aspect, like a smile on the lips of the dead.

"20*th*.—The winter is departing with a smile: it bids us adieu with a brilliant sun shining in a sky pure and smooth as a Venice glass. Another step of Time accomplished. Oh! why can it not, like the coursers of the immortals, with four bounds reach the limits of its lasting?"

The methods of seeing and painting Nature are manifold, and I allow them all, provided they possess truth. But here, indeed, are bits of landscape painting quite to my taste; here is delicacy, feeling, and accurate drawing all in one; the drawing is done from a near view, upon the spot, and, faithful to Nature, is yet without crudity. Nothing betrays the pallet. The colors have all their freshness, their truth, and also a certain tenderness. They have penetrated to the interior mirror, and are seen by reflection. We catch here, above all, *an expression;* we breath here the soul of things.

"28*th* (*March*).—As often as we allow ourselves to penetrate to Nature, our soul opens to the most touching impressions. There is something in Nature, whether she decks herself in smiles during the bright days, or

becomes, as in autumn and winter, pale, gray, cold and tearful, which stirs not only the surface of the spirit, but even its most secret recesses, and awakens a thousand memories which have apparently no connection with the external aspect, but which, without doubt, sustain a relation with the soul of Nature by sympathies to us unknown. This marvellous power I have experienced to-day, stretched in a grove of birches, and breathing the warm air of spring.

"*April 5th.*—A beautiful day as one could wish: some clouds, but only as many as are needed to give picturesqueness to the sky. They assume more and more their summer forms. Their scattered groups repose motionless under the sun, like flocks of sheep in the pastures, during the heat of the day. I have seen a swallow, and I have heard the bees humming over the flowers. Seating myself in the sun, in order that I may be saturated to the marrow with divine spring, I have experienced some of the impressions of my childhood; for a moment I have regarded the sky with its clouds, the earth with its forests, its songs, its murmurings, as I did then. This renewing of the first aspect of things, of the expression which our first thoughts put upon them is, to my thinking, one of the sweetest influences of childhood on the current of life."

But soon arise in him conflict and doubt. Guérin, at this date, is still strictly Christian. He arraigns his soul for responding with such liveliness to the insinuating delights of Nature, on a day of sacred contrition and mourning, for this fifth of April was a Good-Friday. The seclusion of penitence within which this Holy Week confines him, wearies, and he reproaches himself for it. Rule and revery are at war within him. He whose

instinct it is to be in motion, to wander, to chase the infinite in the breathings, in the murmurs of winds and of waters, in the odors of budding, and the perfumes of blossoming flowers, he who could say in planning journeys: "It will be charming to stray about; when we wander, we feel that we fulfil the true condition of humanity; there lies, I think, the secret of the charm—" he tries, at this point in his life, to reconcile Christianity with devotion to Nature; he seeks, if haply there may be, a mystic relation between the worship of that nature which culminates in the heart of man, and sacrifices itself there as on an altar, and the eucharistic offering in the same heart. Vain effort! he attempts the impossible and irreconcilable; he will only succeed in delaying, in his own case, his near, irresistible engulfment. For there is no middle course: the Cross bars, more or less, a free view of Nature; Great Pan has nothing in common with the crucified Divinity. A certain distrustful and timid soberness is imposed, as a first condition, upon the student of Christianity. And Guérin, on the contrary, offers no resistance to this temptation; all the chance incidents of nature, an April shower, a March flurry, the tender and capricious breezes of May, all speak to him, lay hold of him, possess him, transport him. In vain, he pauses in brief moments and cries: "Heavens! how is it that my repose is affected by what passes in the air, and that my soul's peace is thus surrendered to the caprice of the winds?" He ceases not to surrender himself, he abandons himself to it, he intoxicates himself with the life of things, and wishes, at intervals, to be merged in its universality:

"*April 25th.*—It has just been raining. Nature is fresh, radiant; the earth seems to taste with delight the

water which brings it life. One would say that the birds' throats are also refreshed by this rain: their song is purer, more gushing, more piercing, and vibrates wonderfully in the air—now become exquisitely sonorous and echoing. The nightingales, the bullfinches, the blackbirds, the thrushes, the orioles, the finches, the wrens, all sing and rejoice. A goose, screaming like a trumpet, adds to the charm by contrast. The motionless trees seem to listen to all these sounds. Innumerable apple-trees in flower look, from a distance, like balls of snow; the cherry-trees, also in white, rise in pyramids or unfold in fans of flowers.

"The birds seem, at times, to aim at those orchestral effects in which all the instruments mingle in a maze of harmony.

"If it were possible to identify ourselves with spring, to carry this thought to the point of believing that all the life, all the love which leavens Nature, culminates in ourselves; to feel ourselves at once flower, verdure, bird, song, freshness, elasticity, delight, serenity: what would become of me? There are moments when, by dint of concentrating one's thoughts on this idea, and of gazing intently on Nature, one seems to experience some such thing."

A month has elapsed; the period when spring, long brooded and nursed, bursts forth, no longer in flowers, but in leaves; when greenness overflows, when there takes place in the space of two or three mornings an almost instantaneous flood of verdure—is admirably given:

"*May 3d.*—A joyful day, full of sunshine; a balmy breeze, perfumes in the air; in the soul, bliss. The verdure grows visibly; it has darted from the garden

into the copses; it has got the upper hand all along the pond; it leaps, so to speak, from tree to tree, from thicket to thicket, in the fields, and on the hillsides, and I see where it has already reached the forest, and begins to overflow upon its huge back. Soon it will have spread as far as the eye can reach, and all these wide spaces enclosed by the horizon, will be waving and murmuring like a vast sea, a sea of emerald. A few days more, and we shall have all the pomp, all the display of the vegetable kingdom."

And the time when all which was at first but flower without the leaf, is now only germ and foliage, when the loves of the plants are over, and when the nurture of the fruit begins:

"*May 22d.*—There are no longer flowers on the trees. Their mission of love fulfilled, they are dead, like a mother who perishes in giving life. The fruit has set; it feels the influence of the vital and reproductive energy which is to throw upon the world new individuals. An innumerable generation actually hangs on the branches of all the trees, on the fibres of the most insignificant grasses, like babes on the mother's breast. All these germs, incalculable in their number and variety, are there, suspended between heaven and earth in their cradle, and given over to the winds, whose charge it is to rock these beings. Unseen amid the living forests, swing the forests of the future. Nature is all absorbed in the vast cares of her maternity."

Although heartily devoted to Brittany, which he calls *the good country*, the child of the South awakens at times in Guérin; *Mignon* recalls the blue sky, and the land where the olives bloom. The inmate of La Chênaie is not deluded by these sylvan pageants, and rural beauties,

which are always so prone, in that region, again to become dry and harsh; La Chênaie, all Brittany "has the air," he says, "of a gray and wrinkled old woman, transformed by the fairies' wand into a young and most winning girl of sixteen." But beneath the form of the winning young girl, the old woman, on certain days reappears. One morning in the midst of June, the fine weather has vanished, one knows not whither; the west wind, like a shepherd, driving before him his numberless flocks of clouds, permeates everywhere. Side by side with verdure is winter, and the contrast, moreover, is painful; and even when there is sunshine, in her days of high festival, the summer of Brittany has always, to his feeling, something gloomy, veiled, shut in. It is like a miser making a display; there is a churlishness in his magnificence.

"Give me our sky of Languedoc, so lavish in light, so blue, so widely arched!" Thus cries, in these days, almost like an exile, he who dreams of his soft nest at Cayla and at Roche d'Onelle. In his excursions about the country, and when he crosses the moors, then it is that Nature appears to him barren and cheerless, in the garb of wretchedness and poverty; but, for all that, he does not scorn her; on this theme he has composed some very pungent verses, in which the ruggedness of the country is truthfully rendered; he understands it so well, this ruggedness, he clasps it so closely, that he triumphs over it. Like the Cybele of the Homeric poem, who appeared at first under the disguise of a barren old woman to the young girls seated by the wayside, and who was then suddenly transformed into the fruitful and glorious goddess, Nature, in Brittany, ends by yielding to Guérin all that she possesses: if for a

moment he has slighted her, he quickly repents, and she pardons him; she ceases to appear ungrateful in his eyes, she becomes again as beautiful as it is possible for her to be: the moor itself becomes animated, invests itself for him, even in its least details, with I know not what charm.

These last things he says in verse, and it is for that reason that I do not quote them. As to the verses of Guérin, they are natural, easy, flowing, but unfinished. He uses habitually, and from preference, a verse which I know well, from having attempted in my day to introduce and apply it—the familiar Alexandrine, adapted, in his use, to a conversational tone, permitting all the intricacies of a friendly talk. "Your poetry sings too much," he wrote to his sister Eugénie; "it does not talk enough." He avoids the strophe, as breaking too easily into a gallop, and running away with its rider; he avoids no less the Lamartinian verse, as rocking too gently its dreaming gondolier. He believes that much may be made of this Alexandrine verse, which, well handled, is not so stiff as it appears to be; which is capable of so many fine turns, and even of charming carelessness. This whole theory appears to me true, and it is also mine. It is only in the application that Guérin is at fault, as we ourselves may have been; but he errs more than is necessary, and far too much. Above all, he trusts too much to chance; and what he said of another of his friends may be said of him, that his verse gushes from him "*like water from a fountain.*" He has detached lines which are very happy, very free; but his style drags, is tedious, and becomes complicated like prose. He knows not how to prune, to time his periods, and, after a certain number of uneven, irregular verses, to

restore the full tone and mark the rhythm. The name of Brizeux, the Breton poet, is naturally associated with that of Guérin, the Breton landscape-painter. Guérin must have read the *Marie* of Brizeux, but I do not see that he speaks of it. We must exaggerate nothing : this pretty *Marie*, in her first dress, was only a little peasant, dressed up according to the custom and standard of Paris. It was not until later that Brizeux thought seriously of making himself Breton. In the poem by him which bears this title, *Les Bretons*, he has succeeded in two or three grand and forcible pictures ; as a whole, it lacks interest, and is destitute of charm. I do not speak of the various collections which have followed, and which, save some rather rare fragments, are only the unpromising efforts, more and more abrupt, of an arid and exhausted vein. Now, what Guérin had preëminently, was impulse, raciness, charm, breadth, and power. The author of the *Centaur* is of another order than the discreet lover of *Marie.* But Brizeux, in verse, is artistic, and Guérin is not sufficiently so. Brizeux has the science of poetry ; and if he allows his impulse too little play ; if, for good reasons, he never sets it free ; if he never has what the generous poet Lucretian calls the *magnum immissis certamen habenis*—the headlong charge with loosened rein—at least he keeps the folds of his garment well girdled, and has skilful and charming ways of clasping it.

In 1833, Guérin, this Breton by adoption, who was then far more of a Breton in spirit than Brizeux, lived in the full enjoyment of this rural, tranquil, poetic, and Christian life, whose vital current pulsated through his genius, and diffused itself freshly in his private writings. I am aware he had his troubles, his failures of the inner

life : we shall return, if only to point it out, to this weak side of his soul and his will. His talent, later, will be more manly, at the same time that his conscience is less disturbed ; here, he appears in all the delicate bloom of youth. There was a single moment when every tint could be noted, when his ideas harmonized and blended. Imagine, at La Chênaie, which was still called a religious house, on Easter-day of this year 1833—the seventh of April—a radiant morning, and the touching scene then for the last time enacted. He who was still the Abbé Lamennais was celebrating the Easter mass in the chapel—his last mass—and was administering the Communion with his own hand to a few young disciples, who, still faithful, believed him faithful also : they were Guérin, Élie de Kertanguy, François du Breil de Marzan, a fervent young poet, overjoyed in bringing to the holy table a new recruit, a friend older by ten years—Hippolyte de la Morvonnais, himself a poet. There were at this time at La Chênaie, or on the point of arriving, certain men whose meeting and intercourse was a source of pure joy : the Abbé Gerbet, a gentle soul of tender affability ; the Abbé Cazalès, a loving heart, and wise in the ways of the inner life ; other names, some of which have been since noted in divers branches of science : Eugène Boré, Frédéric de la Provostaye—altogether a pious and learned band. Who would have said then, to those who still clustered round the master, that he who had just administered the communion to them with his own hand, would administer it no more, would refuse it himself forever, and would soon have for a device—only too appropriate—an *oak shattered by the tempest*, with this haughty motto : "*I break, and bend not!*"—a Titanic device, presumptuous as Capaneus.

"Oh, if we had then been told it, what a shudder would have passed through our veins!" wrote one of them. But for us, whose only business here is to speak of literature, it is impossible not to notice such a memorable epoch in the religious history of the time, not to connect therewith the talent of Guérin, and not to regret that the impetuous master-mind, which was already brewing storms, had not then done as did the obscure disciple standing in the shadow of his wing: that he had not opened his heart and his ear to some strains of the pastoral flute; that, instead of letting himself loose in imagination upon society, and seeing in it only hell, dungeons, cellars, sinks of iniquity (visions which constantly came back and beset him), he had not more frequently looked toward Nature, there to soften and calm himself. And yet, this same M. Lamennais wrote, some months after, to one of his religious friends in Italy: "You are on the threshold of spring, earlier than in France, in the country that you inhabit; I hope that it will have a happy influence upon your health. Abandon yourself to all the sweetness of this season of renewal; be a flower with the flowers. We lose, by our own fault, a part—the greatest part—of the blessings of the Creator; He surrounds us with His gifts, and we refuse to enjoy them by I know not what dreary determination to torment ourselves. In the midst of an atmosphere of perfumes which emanates from Him, we make one for ourselves, composed of all the deadly vapors that our cares, our anxieties, and our griefs exhale—fatal bell of the diver which isolates us in the bosom of a vast ocean."

And who, pray, had taken his post in this bell, and liked to stay there better than himself?

I have still something to say upon this position of

Guérin at La Chênaie and in Brittany, upon this nursing season of his talents.

Since I have spoken of Lamennais at this date of 1833, and such as he still appeared in the eyes of this faithful circle, how is it possible to avoid calling attention to the portrait that Guérin has sketched of him, in a letter of the sixteenth of May to M. de Bayne de Raysac, one of his southern friends? It is decidedly the most living, speaking likeness of that side of Lamennais in which, by merely reading him, it is difficult to believe; one view of a soul which appeared to forget itself entirely in conversation, so gay and charming was it, and which then would be so quickly eclipsed that his brow would wrinkle and his countenance suddenly grow dark. Guérin shows him to us as he saw him, in his happiest mood, and sometimes in the pride of his strength, but without the dark tints. The letters of Guérin to his friends serve to fill out the impressions noted in his journal during this time; and some of the pages of this journal are themselves only extracts from his letters which seemed to him, before passing from his hand, deserving of being copied. In fact, the artist, the painter in him, boldly making his studies, was trying his hand. One of the holidays he most anticipated, which he had promised himself from his first arrival in Brittany, was a little trip to the seaside. On the twenty-eighth of March, in a walk pushed further than usual with the Abbé Gerbet and another companion, he had obtained his first glimpse to the north, from the summit of a hill, of the bay of Cancale, its waters sparkling in the distance, and marking the horizon with a luminous bar. But the actual journey which enabled him to exclaim, "At last, I have seen the ocean!" was not accomplished until the elev-

enth of April. That day, the Thursday after Easter, he set out, at one o'clock in the afternoon, with fine weather and a fresh breeze, on foot, in company with Edmond de Cazalès, who had not yet taken orders. They had not less than six or seven leagues to go; but travelling towards a great goal, and travelling thither by a long route, with a friend, is a twofold happiness. Guérin felt both, so he has told us: "It is a preëminent pleasure to travel—to visit the ocean with so congenial a travelling companion. Our conversation flowed, as it were, a steady stream, from La Chênaie to Saint Malo; and, our six leagues accomplished, I could have wished to see still before us a long stretch of road; for, indeed, conversation is one of those sweet things that we wish to prolong forever." He gives us an idea of these interviews, embracing the world of the heart with that of nature, and rambling through the romance, the recollections, the hopes, and all the charming studies of youth. These pleasant talks, I imagine, resembled in spirit what must have been those of Basil and Gregory in the neighborhood of Athens, and those of Augustine and his friends on the shores of Ostia. The beauty of the picturesque descriptions, of the sea-sketches which follow, is thereby enhanced; these lofty communings furnish the sky of the picture.

The last days which Guérin passed at La Chênaie were full of pleasure, but a pleasure that was often disturbed; he felt, in fact, that this life of retirement was drawing to a close, and that the vacation would bring for him the necessity of making a decision. He enjoyed so much the more, when his imagination permitted, the uniform and deep calm of the last hours.

The seventh of September, at four o'clock in the

afternoon, he went up to the chamber of M. *Feli*, and bade him good-by. After a nine months' sojourn, "the gates of the little paradise of La Chênaie closed behind him." The ambiguous and distressing relations of M. de Lamennais with the diocesan authority, had of late become more complicated, and it was found expedient to break up the little school. Guérin, however, did not yet leave Brittany, and remained there until the end of January, 1834; now at La Brousse, in the family of M. de Marzan; now at Le Val de l'Arguenon, in the retreat of his friend Hippolyte de la Morvonnais; now at Mordreux, with the latter's father-in-law. Here occurred a new and important crisis in his life. He had brought to La Chênaie a secret heart-trouble—I do not say a passion, but a sentiment. A view of certain beeches which he could see from his window towards the pond, and which recalled painfully sweet recollections, revived this sentiment. Some nights he dreamed; listen to one of his dreams:

"*June 15th.*—'*Strange dream!*' I dreamed that I was alone in a vast cathedral. I seemed to be in the presence of God, and in that state of the soul in which one is conscious only of God and of oneself, when a voice arose. This voice—the voice of a woman, infinitely sweet—nevertheless filled the whole church like a vast chorus. I recognized it at once; it was the voice of Louise, '*silver-sweet sounding.*'"

Such dreams, which recall those of the youthful Dante, and of the *Vita Nuova*, belonged only to the intellectual heights of his nature, and were susceptible of cure. And if we should say here all that we think, Guérin was not made for a great and passionate suffering of love. One day, some years after, reading the letters

of Mlle. de Lespinasse, and finding in them a passion by him unfelt, he was greatly affected, and was surprised at his emotion: "In truth," said he, "I knew not there existed an imagination so tender, which could thus agitate my heart. Is it that I know not the measure of this heart? It is not made for that passion which says, 'Let me love, let me see you, or cease to exist!'" No circumstance of his life, not even the inclination which determined his marriage, has ever contradicted this judgment which he passed upon himself; he loved only on the surface, and, as it were, outside the inner curtain of his soul; its depths remained mysterious and sacred. I should say that he, the lover of Nature, felt the universality of things too deeply to love any single object. However this may be, he had a pang at that time; and finding himself, on leaving lonely La Chênaie, in the tender home-circle of Hippolyte de la Morvonnais and his young wife, this sorrow was healed. He was one of those whom the friendly sympathy of a young woman soothes rather than excites. The pure friendship of the chaste wife, and the happiness of which he was witness, without effacing or banishing the other image, caused it to fade into a faint shadow. Everything came right; and Guérin, on the eve of plunging into the *mêlée* of the world, enjoyed some months of perfect peace.

The sketches in which he reproduces those autumn and winter days passed by the side of the sea, in this hospitable home, in this "*Thébaïde des Grèves*," as La Morvonnais rather ambitiously called it, are beautiful pages, which rank, by their innate force, with the best that we know in this style. The thrilling contrast of this peaceful fireside with the almost incessant storms of the ocean—sometimes that other contrast, no less strik-

ing, between the calm sea, the slumber of the fields, and the stormy heart of the beholder—give to the different pictures all their life and variety :

" And see how full of goodness Providence is to me ! For fear that the sudden transition from the mild and tempered air of a religious and solitary life to the torrid zone of the world should try my soul too sorely, it has led me, on leaving the holy retreat, into a home standing on the confines of the two regions, where, without being in solitude, one still belongs not to the world ; a house whose windows, on one side, open upon the plain where sways the tumult of man, and, on the other, upon a desert where chant the servants of God ; on one side upon the ocean, on the other upon the woods : and this figure is a reality, for the house is built upon the border of the sea. I wish to record here the history of my sojourn in it, for the days passed here are full of happiness ; and I know that, in the future, I shall turn back many a time to reperuse their vanished joy. A religious man and a poet ; a woman so well fitted to him that they seem but a twofold soul ; a child who is named for her mother, *Marie*, and the first rays of whose love and intelligence are piercing, like a star, the white cloud of childhood ; a simple life, in an old house ; the ocean, morning and evening, sending us its harmonies ; finally, a traveller descending from Carmel to go to Babylon, who, laying down his staff and sandals, has seated himself at the hospitable door ; here is material for a biblical poem, if I could write things as I can feel them."

I do not miss this biblical poem ; he will tell us enough about it, even in saying that he knows not how. By-and-by we shall have the finest page of it ; but first, let us enjoy with him the view of a *sea in commotion*,

and, at the same time, of the human soul contemplating it :

" Yesterday the wind blew furiously from the west. I have seen the sea in commotion ; but this tumult, sublime as it is, is far inferior, to my taste, to the view of the ocean calm and blue. But why say that the one is not equal to the other ? Who could measure these two sublime sights, and say, The second surpasses the first ? We must simply say, My soul finds more pleasure in the calm than in the storm. Yesterday one wide battle waged on the watery plains. To see the leaping waves, the thought would come of those countless squadrons of Tartars galloping incessantly over the plains of Asia. The entrance to the bay is guarded, as it were, by a chain of granite islets. It was glorious to see the surges rushing to the assault, and hurling themselves frantically, with frightful clamors, against those masses of rock ; to see them take their line of attack, and vie with each other which should first surmount the black head of the reefs. The boldest, or the most agile, vaulted over with a loud shout ; the others, lumbering on more awkwardly, dashed against the rock, flinging showers of spray of a dazzling whiteness, and fell back with a low, muffled growling, like watch-dogs beaten back by the traveller's staff. We witnessed these wild struggles from the top of a cliff, where we found it difficult to withstand the fury of the wind. There we were, with bodies bent forward, legs planted apart to give a wider base for resisting with greater advantage, and both hands clutching our hats to keep them on our heads. The vast tumult of the sea, the clamorous rush of the waves, the equally rapid but silent sweep of the clouds, the sea-birds hovering in the sky and balancing their slender bodies be-

tween two arched wings that seemed to spread indefinitely—this entire assemblage of wild and echoing harmonies, all centring in the souls of two beings five feet high, planted upon the crest of a cliff, shaken like leaves by the violence of the wind, and hardly more visible in that immensity than two birds perched upon a clod of earth—oh! it was something mysterious and awful—one of those mingled moments of sublime excitement and profound meditation, when the soul and Nature, drawing themselves to their full height, confront each other.

"A few steps from us, a group of children, sheltered behind a rock, tended a flock scattered over the bluffs of the coast.

"Throw into this sea-picture a ship in danger, all is changed: we see only the ship. Happy he who can contemplate Nature waste and uninhabited! Happy he who can see her abandoned to her terrible sports without danger to any living being! Happy he who beholds from the top of a mountain the lion bounding and roaring in the plain, when no traveller, nor even a gazelle, is haply passing! That happiness, Hippolyte, we had yesterday; let us thank Heaven for it."

Have the English fireside poets—Cowper, Wordsworth—ever described more deliciously the joys of a pure home, and its domestic happiness—that remembrance of Eden—than the traveller who, sitting for a moment under a blessed roof, has done in these words:

"20*th*.—I have never enjoyed with so much intimacy and seclusion the happiness of home life. Never has the perfume which is wafted through all the rooms of a religious and happy house so completely enveloped me. It is like a cloud of invisible incense that I breathe continually. All these minute details of familiar life, whose

successive links constitute my day, are so many shades of a perpetual delight, which goes on unfolding from the beginning to the end of the day.

"The morning greeting, which renews in some sort the pleasure of my first arrival, (for we accost each other in nearly the same form of words, and, besides, the separation at night is somewhat typical of longer separations, like them, full of dangers and uncertainties;) the breakfast hour, when we forthwith celebrate the joy of reunion; the subsequent walk, a sort of greeting and adoration that we offer to Nature; our return, and our seclusion in an old wainscoted chamber, looking out on the sea, inaccessible to the noise of the house—in a word, a perfect sanctuary of labor; dinner, announced to us not by the sound of the bell, which savors too much of the college or a fine house, but by a gentle voice; the gayety, the lively jests, the rippling flow of talk, rising and falling during the entire meal; the crackling fire of dry brush around which we draw our chairs just afterwards; the tender things we say in the warmth of the fire, roaring as we chat; and, if the weather is fine, the stroll by the side of the ocean, which runs to welcome our party—a mother, her child in her arms, the father of the child, and a stranger, these last two each with a stick in his hand; the rosy lips of the little girl who prattles to the tune of the waves, the tears that she sometimes sheds, and the cries of childish grief on the border of the sea; our thoughts, when we see the mother and child smiling at each other, or the child weeping, and the mother seeking to soothe her with the sweetness of her caresses and her voice; the ocean, which goes on rolling continuously its waves and noises; the dead branches that we cut as we stray hither and thither in the copses, to make a

quick and cheerful fire on our return; this little experiment in woodcraft which brings us near to Nature, and makes us think of M. Féli's peculiar love for the same occupation; the hours of study and poetic outpouring, which carry us along to supper-time; this meal, to which we are summoned by the same gentle voice, spent in the same pleasures as the dinner-hour, but less boisterous, because evening softens and subdues everything; the evening, opening with the sparkle of a cheerful fire, and passing in alternate reading and talking, to die away in sleep: to all the charms of a day thus spent, add that indescribable, angelic beaming, that halo of peace, of freshness and innocence, diffused by the blonde hair, the blue eyes, the silvery voice, the laughter, the little knowing poutings of a child who, I feel certain, makes more than one angel jealous; who enchants you, bewitches you, makes you dotingly fond by a simple motion of her lips—such is the power of helplessness; to all this add, finally, the dreams of the imagination, and you will still be far from attaining the limit of all these domestic delights."

However, these family joys, too keenly felt by a heart to whom it was not given to taste them for himself, affected him too tenderly; he had arrived, he tells us, at the pitch of weeping for a mere nothing, "as do little children and old men." This continual calm, this pleasant monotony of domestic life, prolonged like a sweet but unvarying note, had finished by enervating, by unduly exalting him, by either putting him beside himself, or by placing him too early in possession of his own nature. Excess of tranquillity was for him a new kind of storm; his soul was "in peril," and there was danger in this direction of an intoxication of languor, if he had not

found a counterpoise, a powerful diversion in the contemplation of Nature, as at other moments there had been danger that the sovereign attraction, the potent voice of this Nature, would absorb and master him completely. For Guérin's soul was marvellously sensitive and susceptible, but without safeguard or defence against itself. This time he was wise enough to turn aside in time, and vary the exercise of his sensibility :

"I set about studying her (Nature) even more closely than had been my wont, and by degrees the excitement subsided ; for there issued from fields, from waves, from woods a mild and wholesome virtue, which penetrated my being and changed all my transports to melancholy dreams. This blending of the calm suggestions of Nature with the stormy ecstasies of the heart will beget a state of mind which I would fain retain, for it is a most desirable state for a restless dreamer like myself. It is like a rapture so subdued and tranquil that it carries the soul out of itself, without taking from it the consciousness of a lingering and somewhat stormy sadness. Another result is, that the soul is insensibly steeped in a languor which deadens the keenness of every intellectual faculty, and lulls it into a half-sleep void of all thought, in which, nevertheless, it is conscious of the faculty of dreaming the most beautiful things.

"Nothing can more faithfully represent this state of the soul than the evening this moment falling. Gray clouds, whose edges are slightly silvered, are spread uniformly over the whole face of the sky. The sun, which vanished a few moments ago, has left behind him light enough to relieve for some time the black shadows, and, in a manner, to tone the falling darkness. The winds are hushed, and the tranquil ocean sends up,

when I go out on the threshold to listen, only a melodious murmur which breaks on the soul like a beautiful wave on the beach. The birds, the first to be won by the influence of night, take their flight towards the woods, and their wings are heard rustling in the clouds. The copse which covers the whole hillside of Le Val, which has echoed all day with the warbling of the wren, with the cheerful whistle of the woodpecker, and with the various notes of a multitude of birds, has no longer any sound in its paths and thickets, save the shrill cry of blackbirds chasing each other in their play, after all other birds have their heads under their wings. The noise of man, always the last to be hushed, gradually dies away along the fields. The universal hum ceases, and one hears scarcely a sound except what comes from the towns and hamlets, where, far into the night, are heard the crying of children and the barking of dogs. Silence enfolds me; everything seeks repose, except my pen, which haply disturbs the slumber of some living atom, asleep in the leaves of my notebook, for it makes its own little noise scratching these foolish thoughts. Well! let let it cease, then; for what I write, have written, and shall write, can never be weighed against the sleep of an atom."

Surely, that is as beautiful as beautiful verses. They talk of the Lake poets and their poetry, and La Morvonnais, about this time, was very much taken up with them, so far as to go and visit Wordsworth at his residence at Rydal Mount, near the Lakes of Westmoreland, and to carry on a correspondence with that great and tranquil soul, that patriarch of the domestic muse. Guérin, without giving so much thought to it, was more like the Lake poets, without in any way aiming to imitate them. There

is in their writings no purer pastoral sonnet, there is in the poetic rambles of Cowper no more transparent picture, than the page we have just read, in its painting, at once so true and so tender, so clear and so emotional. The modest sentiment with which he closes, and in which he takes thought for the smallest living atom, might be the envy of a gentle poet of India.

But it was for Guérin to tear himself from this solitude, where he was on the point of forgetting himself and of tasting too freely the fruit of the *lotos*. In a last walk, on a smiling winter afternoon, on those cliffs, along the path which so many times had led him thither through the boxwood and the hazels, he breathes out his adieus and carries away all he can of the soul of things. The next day he is at Caen; a few days after, at Paris. His timid nature, as trembling and shrinking as that of a frightened deer, experiences, on his arrival, a secret horror. He distrusts himself, he fears mankind.

"PARIS, *February 1st*, 1834.—My God! close my eyes; preserve me from seeing all this multitude, the sight of whom gives rise in me to thoughts so bitter, so discouraging. Grant that, in passing through it, I may be deaf to noise, inaccessible to these impressions which overwhelm me when traversing the crowd; and to that end place before mine eyes an image, a vision of things that I love—a field, a vale, a moor, Le Cayla, Le Val—some natural object. I will walk with looks fixed upon these sweet forms, and thus I shall pass, and feel no rude jostling."

Here it is highly proper to enter somewhat into the secret of this nature of Guérin. There was in him a veritable contradiction. Through one side of him, he felt external nature passionately, distractedly; he was capable of

plunging into it with boldness, with a magnificent frenzy; of realizing in it, through his imagination, the fabulous life of the ancient demi-gods. On an entirely different side, he was meditative, he analyzed himself, he took himself up in detail, he belittled himself at will; he undecked his soul with a self-depreciating humility; he belonged to those souls, so to speak, born Christian, which have need of self-accusation, of repentance, of finding outside of themselves a craving for pity, for compassion; who have made confession early, and who will always have need of confession. I have known souls like these, and it has been my fortune to describe one formerly, in a romance which his secret affinity with the character caused Guérin to receive with favor. He also was, but only in a measure, of the race of René; in this sense, that he did not think himself a superior nature; indeed, so far from that, he believed himself to be poor, weak, "*contemptible*," and, in his best days, a nature "*rather lonely than superior:*"

"To be loved as I am," murmured he to himself, "it would be necessary to meet a soul that would be willing to incline towards its inferior; a strong soul, that would bend the knee before the feebler, not to worship it, but to serve, to console it, to protect it, as one would a sick man; a soul, in short, gifted with a sensibility as humble as profound, which would divest itself of pride, so natural even to love, sufficiently to bury its heart in an obscure affection, which the world would in no wise comprehend; to consecrate its life to some weak being, morbid and introspective; to be content to concentrate all its rays upon a flower without brilliancy, weak and always trembling; which would bestow, indeed, perfumes whose sweetness charms and penetrates, but never those which

intoxicate and exalt to the happy delirium of rapture."

His friends struggled as far as possible against this dispirited temper, whose attacks he set forth to them at times, its interior flow and reflow, with an exquisite delicacy, with a startling distinctness. They urged him, on entering this practical life, to lay out for himself a plan of study, to be willing to apply in order, and to concentrate his intellectual forces according to a method, and upon definite subjects. They thought at one time to make him accept a chair of Comparative Literature, which there was some talk of founding at the college of Juilly, then under the charge of MM. de Scorbias and de Salinis; but this idea was never carried out, and Guérin was obliged to content himself with a temporary class in the college Stanislas, and with some lessons which he gave here and there. A cordial Breton friend, who happened to be at Paris (M. Paul Quemper), had undertaken to smooth for him the first difficulties, and he succeeded. This provision made for actual necessities, Guérin betook himself all the more in leisure hours to the life of the soul and of fancy; he overflowed with his peculiar spirit. Retired, as in his *burrow*, in a little garden in Anjou street, near Pépinière street, he transported himself in imagination to the grand and tender spectacles which he had brought back from the land of the west. In his weariness he embraced the stem of his lilac, "as the sole being in the world against which he could lean his faltering nature, as the only thing capable of supporting his embraces." But soon the air of Paris, which he must needs traverse every day, reacted upon this forlorn of twenty-four years. The attraction of the world gradually won him; new friendships were

formed, which, without destroying the old, cast them insensibly into the background. Whoever had met him two years afterwards, worldly, elegant, "*fashionable*" even, a talker able to hold his own with brilliant talkers, would never have said, to see him, that he was a worker "malgré lui." There is nothing like these timid men once let loose, as soon as they have felt the spur. And at the same time this talent, which he persisted in doubting, was constantly developing and growing bold, and at last he applied it to the composition of themes, to creations outside of himself. The artist, properly so called, manifested itself in him.

And here let the piety of a sister, who has presided over this memorial erected to a tender genius, permit us one reflection. In the just tribute paid to the memory of the beloved dead, nothing unjust towards the living should be insinuated, and an omission may be an injustice. The three or four years which Guérin spent in Paris, and in which he lived that life of privations and struggle, of study and of worldliness, of various relations, are in no wise years to be despised or veiled. This life is that which many among us have known, and which they still lead. He lost on one side doubtless, he gained on the other. He was in a measure unfaithful to the freshness of his youthful impressions; but, like all the unfaithful who are not too much so, he expanded only the better for it. Talent is a stem which takes root willingly in virtue, but which often also climbs beyond it and leaves it behind: it is seldom even at the moment of blooming that it belongs wholly to it: it is only at the breath of passion that it yields all its perfumes.

Preserving all the delicacies of his heart, his impressions of the country and of landscape, which he revived

from time to time in hurried visits, Guérin, divided henceforth between two worships, the *God of cities and the God of deserts*, was the better prepared to take up art, and to venture upon the composition of a work. He continued, it is true, to write in his journal that he believed himself without talent; he demonstrated it to himself in his best way, in his subtle and charming pages, which pages themselves proved the existence of this talent. But when he ventured to say these things to his friends, intellectual men, workers, of sprightly wit and animation, to d'Aurevilly, to Scudo, to Amédée René* and some others, he was unmercifully rallied and taunted, and, what is better, he was reassured against himself; he unconsciously borrowed their activity and boldness. And it is thus that he at last entered into his full power. The idea of the CENTAUR came to him in consequence of several visits which he had made with M. Trebutien to the *Musée des Antiques*. He was then reading Pausanias, and was astonished at the multitude of objects described by the Greek antiquary: "Greece," said he, "is like a vast museum." We are witnesses of the two orders, the two trains of ideas which met and reunited in him in a fruitful alliance.

THE CENTAUR is in no way an imitation of Ballanche; it is an original conception and peculiar to Guérin. We have seen how he loved to diffuse himself, and, as it were, to clasp Nature in the tendrils of his soul; he was, at certain times, like those wandering plants whose roots float

* In the collection of poems published in 1841 by M. Amédée René, under the title of *Heures de Poésie*, there is a beautiful piece dedicated "*to the memory of Maurice de Guérin*," in which his poetic nature is very well characterized: he is called *sick for the infinite*, (*malade d'infini*).

on the surface of the sea at the will of the waves. He has expressed many a time this sense of the soul interfused, and wandering with Nature; there were days when, in his love of calm, he envied "the strong and silent life which holds sway under the bark of the oak;" he dreamed of some absurd metamorphosis into a tree; but this destiny of old age, this end worthy of *Philemon* and *Baucis*, and even better suited to the wisdom of a Laprade, jarred with the ardent, impetuous current of a young heart. Guérin, then, had sought until now for his form and had not found it: it was suddenly revealed to him and personified in the figure of the CENTAUR. These great primal organizations whose existence Lucretian denied, and in which Guérin almost makes us believe; in whom the genius of man was joined to animal force still unsubdued and forming a part of it: by whom Nature, hardly emerged from the waters, was overrun, taken possession of, or rather set on fire, in their reckless, interminable running up and down; seemed to him worthy of a sculptor, and also of a hearer capable of repeating the mystery. He supposed the last of the Centaurs interrogated on the summit of a mountain, by the side of his cave, and relating in his melancholy old age the pleasures of his youth to a curious mortal, to this diminutive of the Centaur, who is called man; for man, seen in this fabulous, grand perspective, would be only a Centaur degraded and *set on his feet.* There is nothing so powerful as this dream, occupying a few pages; nothing more finished and more classically executed.

Guérin projected more; this was only a beginning. He had also done a *Bacchante*, which has not been found, a fragment antedating I know not what prose

poem whose subject was *Bacchus dans l'Inde;* he meditated a *Hermaphrodite. La Galerie des Antiques* thus furnished him moulds into which he was henceforth to pour, and give stability, under severe or tender forms, to all his sensations gathered from the heaths and strands. A first phase was opening for his talent. But the artist, in the presence of his ideal temple, made only the statue for the threshold; he was to fall at the outset of his career. Happy in a recent marriage with a young and beautiful creole, secure henceforth of a home and leisure, he was attacked by a vital disorder, which made only too clear the source of his habitual weakness. One understood then the persistent lament of this rich nature; the germs of destruction and premature death which were sown in the core of his organism, in the roots of life, were frequently transferred to his moral nature by this feeling of inexpressible discouragement and exhaustion. This lovely young man, borne dying to the south, expired in the summer of 1839, at the moment when he beheld again his native sky, and when he regained in it all the freshness of early tenderness and religion. The guardian angels of home watched prayerfully over his pillow, and consoled his last look. He was only twenty-nine years old. These two volumes, which are issued to-day, will make him live; and by a just compensation for a destiny so cruelly cut off, that which was scattered, which was written and noted for himself alone, which he has not had time to weave and trim by the rules of art, becomes his most beautiful crown, which, if I am not mistaken, will never wither.

SAINTE BEUVE,
De l'Académie Française.

JOURNAL

OF

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN.

(JULY, 1832—OCTOBER, 1835.)

LE CAYLA, *July 10th*, 1832.

NEARLY three months and a half have I been in the country, under the paternal roof, *at home* (that charming English phrase completely summing up our *chez soi*), in the centre of a clear horizon. I have seen the spring—spring at liberty, free, loosed from every constraint—tossing flowers and verdure at its will, running like a thoughtless child along our valleys and hills, putting forth sublime conceptions and gracious fancies, comparing kinds, harmonizing contrasts, after the manner or rather for the instruction of great artists. I have seated myself in the depths of the woods, on the margin of the brooks, on the swell of the hills; I have set foot again in all the places where, as a child, I had rested it, rapidly and with all the carelessness of that age. To-day I have planted it firmly in those places; I have paused and

dwelt upon my early footprints ; I have begun anew my pilgrimage in contemplation and devotion—in the contemplation of memories, and in the devotion of the soul to the impressions of its first landscape.

30*th.*—There are books which need no second reading. I have selected *René* for reperusal to-day—one of the most disenchanted days of my life, when my heart has seemed dead, a day of the dryest barrenness—to test the whole power of this book upon a soul, and I have recognized that it is great. This reading has steeped my soul in softness, as the rain of the storm. I take an infinite delight in coming back to my earliest reading, the passionate reading of sixteen up to nineteen years of age. I love to draw tears at the nearly exhausted springs of my youth.

August 4th.—To-day I have completed my twenty-second year. I have often seen, in Paris, children going to the grave in their little coffins, and thus passing through the mighty throng. O ! why did I not pass through the world like them, buried in the coffin of my innocence and in the oblivion of the life of a day ? Those little angels know nothing of earth ; they grow in the sky. My father has told me that, in my infancy, he has often seen my soul upon my lips, ready to take wing. God and paternal love held it back for the ordeal of life. Gratitude and love to both ! But I cannot repress my longing for the sky where I should be, and which I can reach only by the oblique line of the human career.

13*th.*—I am weak—very weak. How many times, even since grace has walked with me, have I not fallen, like a child without leading-strings ! My soul is frail beyond anything that can be imagined. It is the feeling of my weakness which makes me seek a shelter, and which

gives me strength to break with the world in order to rest more surely with God. Two days of the great world of Paris will put an end to all my resolutions. They must needs be hidden, buried, sheltered in retirement. Now among asylums open to souls in need of escape, none is more favorable for me than the house of M. de Lamennais, full of science and piety.

When I reflect on it, I blush for my life, which I have so abused. I have blasted my humanity. Fortunately, I had two parts in my soul; I have plunged only halfway in evil. While one-half of me was grovelling in the dust, the other, inaccessible to all blemish, lofty and serene, was gathering, drop by drop, that poesy which shall gush forth, if God grants me the time. In that lies my all. I owe everything to poesy, since there is no other word to express the entirety of my thoughts. I owe to it all which is still pure, elevated, and solid in my soul; I owe it all consolations I have had; I shall owe to it, perhaps, my future.

I feel that my friendship for L—— is strong to-day, after having passed through the extravagances of college life, and the delirium of our first sallying forth into the world. It waxes grave as a season and sweet as a fruit which attains its maturity.

La Chênaie, *February 6th*, 1833.—I have just finished reading the first volume of the "Memoirs of Goethe." This book has left upon me opposite impressions. My imagination is all astir with Margaret, with Lucinda, with Frederica—Klopstock, Herder, Wieland, Gellert, Gleim, Bürger, that burst of German poetry, which rises so fair, so national, toward the middle of the eighteenth century; all that fermentation of thought in the German brain interests profoundly, especially in face

of the actual epoch, so fruitful and so glorious for Germany. But a bitter thought occurs in following the details of education, and the march of the intellectual development of the young, such as it is understood in this country; and the bitterness springs from a comparison with French education. I have spent ten years in the colleges, and I have come out, bringing, together with some scraps of Latin and Greek, an enormous mass of weariness. That is about the result of all college education in France. They put into the hands of young men the ancient authors; that is well. But do they teach them to know, to appreciate antiquity? Have they ever developed for them the relations of those magnificent literatures with the Nature, with the religious dogmas, the systems of philosophy, the fine arts, the civilizations of the ancient nations? Has their intelligence ever been led by those beautiful links which bind all parts of the civilization of a people, and make of it a superb whole, all whose details touch, reflect, and mutually explain each other? What professor, reading Homer or Virgil to his pupils, has developed the poetry of the Iliad or the Æneid by the poetry of Nature under the sky of Greece or Italy? Who has dreamed of annotating reciprocally the poets by the philosophers, the philosophers by the poets, the latter by the artists, Plato by Homer, Homer by Phidias? They isolate these great geniuses, they disjoint a literature, and they fling you its scattered limbs, without taking the trouble to tell you what place they occupy, what relations they mutually sustain in the great organization whence they have been detached. Children take a special delight in cutting out the pictures which fall into their hands; they separate with great skill the figures one from the other; their

scissors follow exactly all their outlines, and the group thus divided is portioned out among the little company, because each one wants an *image.* The labor of our professors bears no slight resemblance to that of the children; and an author, thus cut off from his surroundings, is as difficult to understand as the figure cut out by the children and separated from the grouping and the background of the picture. After that, need we be astonished that the studies are so empty, so insufficient? What can remain from a long devotion to the dead letter, stripped, as it were, of meaning, except disgust, and an almost entire hatred of study? In Germany, on the contrary, a broad philosophy presides over literary studies, and sheds over the earliest labors of youth that grace which so sweetly cherishes and develops the love of science.

Come, courage! I am so accustomed to farewells, separations! Ah! nevertheless, that one is too severe. No, it is not too severe, since there is no evil, however great, which does not call forth in the soul an equal faculty of endurance. I shall endure, but shall keep my word.

March 3d.—I commenced to write in this blank book the tenth of July, 1832, and I have come back to it only at long intervals. These eight months have passed in the cruelest sufferings of soul. I have written little, because my powers have been nearly crushed. If the malady had left my intellect a little liberty, I should have gathered some very curious observations upon moral suffering; but I was bewildered with anguish. I think spring will do me great good. As the sun ranges higher and vital heat pervades nature, the sharpness of grief loses its energy; I feel its bonds relax, and my soul,

long compressed and almost strangled, expands in proportion and opens to breathe.

The hours of to-day have enchanted me. The sun, for the first time in many days, has shown himself in all his radiant beauty. He has unfolded the buds of the leaves and flowers, and awakened in my bosom a thousand tender thoughts. The clouds resume their light and graceful shapes, and sketch the blue with charming fancies. The woods have not yet their leaves, but they take on I know not what spirited and joyful air, which gives them an entirely new face. Everything is preparing for the great holiday of Nature.

4th.—I see laborers digging in the garden. These poor people thus expend their whole life to gain wherewith to eat their bread from day to day—their dry and black bread. What a mystery is that of all these existences, so rude and lowly!—and they are almost the whole of the human race. A day will come when all these drudges of society will show their blackened and callous hands, seamed with grasping the handles of their tools, and will say, "Thou, Lord, who hast said, Blessed are the poor and lowly, behold us!"

"To you, good God, we make our last appeal!"

6th.—Élie * and I have had a long interview. Always full of enthusiasm for travels, we have made an excursion to America; we have ascended the great rivers, sailed over the lakes, wandered through the forests in company with Natty Bumpo and Cooper's other heroes.

Delightful reminiscences! Back to Europe. Prodigious fermentation of society. The infinity of thought

* Élie de Kertanguy died 1846.

which pervades human intelligence, all intelligences, beginning with the highest angelic powers down to ourselves, and perhaps below us—who knows? A sea of thought heaving before God. What is a human intelligence taken apart from this immensity; what is this immensity itself compared with the thought eternal, God? Bewilderment! He is a man who has pondered all these things, who has sounded the depths of humility, and whose soul is so strong that he writes, not for this world's fame, but for the world's good, without flinching or failing. Mysterious struggles of a genius, a missionary, a martyr! God has, in some sort, revealed to him the profoundest depths of society, and all the secrets of the evil which preys upon it. All this he has seen; for a time he has been uncertain how to lay hold of this social malady, and he has been a prey to great sadness, to a sort of anguish. At last he found what he sought, and joy returned to him. He accomplished his great mission. O! whoever should know the rude combats of his soul, could not have sufficient admiration for such devotion, for the inner forces of that man are incessantly struggling with thoughts which would crush powers less strong than his; but he has received the apostleship, like St. Paul, and he preaches a gospel. "Nam si evangelizavero, non est mihi gloria; necessitas enim mihi incumbit; væ enim mihi est, si non evangelizavero."

Hence we arrived at the necessity, the indispensable law which binds each one to fulfil his social mission, however narrow, however inconsiderable it may be. We owe all to the general good; not only the sacrifice of our passions, but also the sacrifice of our innocent tastes, of our plans of individual happiness, if this happiness consist in being idle and useless to our kind. We did cast

a glance at that life, so sweet, so peaceable, which nestles in the bosom of the family; but that, too, was a glance of sacrifice, resolved as we are to choose our place where we can do the most good.

This interview has restored my powers, so feeble, so tottering. My heart is filled with an unknown sweetness, and my soul has taken possession of herself, like a sick man, who, having drunk a healing potion, sinks into his bed, expressing satisfaction, which is, in truth, naught but the expression of hope.

8th.—A snowy day. A southeast wind curls the snow in eddies, in great whirls of a dazzling whiteness. It melts as it falls. Here we are transported, as it were, into the heart of winter, after a few spring smiles. The wind is cold enough; the little singing-birds, newcomers, shiver, and the flowers, too. The chinks of the partitions and the sashes wail as in January; and I, in my poor wrapper, shrink into myself, like Nature.

9th.—More snow, hail, blasts, cold. Poor Brittany! thou sorely needest a little verdure to brighten thy sombre face. O! doff quickly, then, thy hooded winter cloak, and let me see thee take thy light garment of spring, tissue of leaves and of flowers. When shall I see the skirts of thy robe fluttering at the will of the winds?—Read Homer, and the exploits of the Norman heroes in Italy and Sicily. Met and shook hands with Achilles, Diomed, Ulysses, Robert Guiscard, Roger.

10th.—

> Τοῦτο νὺ καὶ γέρας οἷδν ὀΐσυροῖσι βροτοῖσι
> Κείρασθαί τε κόμην, βαλέειν τ' ἀπὸ δάχρυ παρειῶν.
>
> *Odyss.*, iv.

11th.—It has snowed all night. My shutters, poorly fastened, allowed me glimpses, as soon as I rose, of that

great sheet of white which has been silently spread over the fields. The black trunks of the trees rise like columns of ebony from the ivory-paved court of a temple; this severe and sharp contrast, and a certain dejected manner in the woods, make one very sad. Naught is heard; not a living thing, save a few sparrows who take refuge, peeping as they go, in the fir-trees that stretch their long arms laden with snow. The interior of these bushy trees is impervious to the frosts; it is a shelter prepared by Providence. The little birds know it well.

I have visited our primroses; each was bearing its little burden of snow, and bending its head under the weight. These pretty flowers, so richly colored, presented a charming effect under their white hoods. I saw whole tufts of them covered over with a single block of snow; all these laughing flowers thus veiled, and leaning the one against the other, seemed like a group of young girls overtaken by a shower and getting to shelter under a white apron.

I was expecting a letter this evening; I did not receive it, but a friend arrived. It would be very curious to note whether, in the most trifling disappointments of life, Providence does not contrive for us compensations, which our ill-humor and injustice prevent our appreciating.

12*th.*—"Gustans gustavi in summitate virgae, quae erat in manu mea, paululum mellis, et ecce morior"—*Lib. Reg., cap. XIV.*

15*th.*—We live the interior life too little; we scarcely live it at all. What has become of that inward eye which God has given us to keep unceasing watch over our soul, to be the witness of the mysterious workings of thought, the ineffable motion of life in the tabernacle of

humanity? It is closed, it slumbers; and we open wide our earthly eyes, and yet understand nothing in nature, not availing ourselves of that sense which would reveal it to us, reflected in the divine mirror of the spirit. There is no contact between ourselves and Nature; we have knowledge of the exterior form alone, and none at all of the meaning of the hidden language, of beauty considered as eternal and partaking of God—things which would all be limpidly outlined and mirrored in a soul endowed with the marvellous introspective faculty. O! this contact between nature and the soul would engender an unspeakable delight, a prodigious love of Heaven and God.

To descend into the soul of man, is to cause Nature to descend into his soul.

16*th.*—I find in "*L'Europe Litteraire*" some remarkable ideas. It is there said that the zones of thought grow less distinct each day; that the mighty intellects scattered over the whole globe begin to comprehend each other; that everything advances towards a vast republic of human thought. And again: that the ancients have seized wonderfully well upon the general traits of the human soul and of Nature; that they fashioned from them a poetry, external, plastic, visible; but that the epoch of an introspective, profound, analytical poetry has arrived. These thoughts are not altogether new, and have been for some time current in the world; but it is good to actualize as much as possible the great movement which is at work, and to give it shape.

19*th.*—Took a walk in the forest of Coëtquen. Happened upon a place remarkable for its wildness; the road descends with a sudden pitch into a little ravine where flows a little brook over a slaty bed, which gives

its waters a blackish hue, disagreeable at first, but which ceases to be so when you have noted its harmony with the black trunks of the old oaks, the sombre verdure of the ivies, and its contrast with the white and glossy limbs of the birches. A strong north wind swept through the forest, and caused it to utter deep roarings. The trees, under the buffets of the wind, struggled like madmen. Through the branches we saw the clouds flying rapidly in black and grotesque masses, and seeming lightly to graze the tops of the trees. This great gloomy, floating veil showed rents here and there, through which glided a ray of sunshine which fell like a flash of lightning into the bosom of the forest. These sudden passages of light gave to the majestic depths of shade a haggard and weird aspect, like a smile on the lips of the dead.

20*th*.—The winter is departing with a smile ; it bids adieu with a brilliant sun shining in a sky pure and smooth as a Venice-glass. Another step of time accomplished. Oh ! why can it not, like the coursers of the immortals, with four bounds reach the limits of its lasting !

Finished reading the first volume of "The History of the Italian Republics." It is a grand spectacle to see Liberty emerging from the wreck and rubbish of the Roman Empire and taking her seat, cross in hand, on the shores of the seas, at Venice, Genoa and Pisa. At first she showed herself at Amalfi, at Naples, at Gaëta ; but the kings hunted her away. Then she bade a long farewell to Southern Italy, and ever skirting the sea, settled in the North. M. Sismonde Sismondi has failed to appreciate the fine drama of Italian liberty ; he has not grasped the character of the highest personage, the true hero of that grand scene, the Pope. Actors to whom be-

long the leading parts, he casts almost among the supernumeraries. He represents sovereign pontiffs like vulgar self-seekers, quarrelsome barons, the tiara on their heads and the cross in their hands. His work has in it this immense void, which makes itself felt on every page. To the Countess Matilda, too, he gives extremely poor payment for her beautiful devotion to the cause of the popes, and consequently the cause of Italian liberty.

21*st.*—A source of pleasure drained. I have read the last page of "Studies of Nature." It is one of those books we wish would never end. There is little to be gained from it for science, but much for poetry, for the elevation of the soul, and the contemplation of Nature. This book sets free and enlightens a faculty which we all have, however veiled, vague, and almost totally reft of energy,—the faculty which gathers the beauty of Nature, and hands it over to the soul, which spiritualizes it, harmonizes it, combines it with ideal beauty, and thus enlarges its sphere of love and adoration.

My God! why do we complain of our isolation? I was long possessed by this foolish idea.

At that time I was living on a wrong principle; I had established false relations between the physical world and my soul, and I suffered much, for Nature denied me her treasures of joy, and spurned my friendship, on account of these false relations. I was disconsolate in the midst of a profound solitude, the world seemed to me worse than a desert and wholly barren island in the bosom of a wild ocean. The silence was frightful. Folly! pure folly! There is no isolation for the man who knows how to take his place in the universal harmony, and to open his soul to all the impressions of that harmony. Then one comes to have almost a physical consciousness that

we live from God and in God; the spirit drinks, to repletion, of this universal life; it swims in it, like a fish in water.

Let us abjure the worship of idols, let us turn our backs on all the deities of art, decked with paint and false finery, on all these images, with mouths that speak not. Let us adore Nature, frank, ingenuous, and in no respect exclusive. Great God! how can men make poetry in face of the broad poem of the universe? Your poetry! the Lord has made it for you; it is the created world. Think you, you hold deeper meanings than he?

22d.—A profitless day; the letter which I received yesterday evening has completely paralyzed me. It is not very severe, and full of good advice. But, unfortunately, I am so constituted that the best remedies fail of effect upon me; nay, what is much more strange, often make me worse. Thus this letter, in probing my most sensitive wounds in order to heal them, has thrilled in me the chord of all my past sufferings. All my bitter recollections have sprung into waking life at a bound; in a few hours I have resumed the miseries of ten years, taken them up not in thought merely, but with a deep and actual feeling of them. As long as those sad topics shall remain stamped on my memory, my new life will be feeble and languid. A trifle suffices to plunge me anew into these memories, and brings on paroxysms that exhaust and agonize me.

It is true that this past of which I speak is yet so near that it throws over me the full length of its shadow. As I recede from it, I trust its present power will grow weaker, and that at last I shall find myself free from its impressions. Nevertheless, I persist in believing that disease in me is so organic, and the wreck so complete,

that I shall never be wholly restored. That apprehensive, uneasy, analyzing trait of my character is too active ever to leave me any repose. Mayhap through love of God shall I succeed one day in robbing it of a portion of its power. If I alone suffered, it were well; but those that I love, and who are good enough to love me, suffer also. I cause them grief, and that is my greatest unhappiness.

Intellectually I make very slow advances. I apprehend a thousand things, but this is a vexation rather than a progress. I read slowly, and am never free from disquieting preoccupations. Even the ravishing contemplation of Nature cannot lull these thoughts that, like insects, buzz incessantly about my soul. I am dragging through the study of the languages, of which, however, I am fond. I am backward in everything, and yet I am conscious of something which sharply spurs me on.

24*th.*—*É*—— came to me all excitement, with tears in his eyes. "What is the matter?" "M. Féli has frightened me." "How?" "He was sitting behind the chapel, under the two Scotch firs; he took his stick, and drew upon the sward a tomb, and said to me: 'Tis there I wish to lie; but let there be no monumental stone—a simple mound of turf. O! how happy I shall be there!' I thought that he felt ill, that he foresaw his end approaching. Besides, it is not the first time that he has been disturbed by presentiments. He told us, when he set out for Rome: 'I do not expect to see you again; accomplish the good that I have been unable to do.' He longs to die. This world is such a dismal place for a thoroughly Christian soul, and above all for a Christian soul like his."

26*th.*—A young man from Dauphiné, Henry Guillermard by name, sends me some verses with reference to

certain stanzas on Poland, inserted in *L'Avenir* eighteen months ago. Rather an amusing incident to see his self-love start up after so long a time, and for such a trifle!

27*th.*—I jog along pretty well in my new path. Right weary do I become at times; but God soon restores my courage, doubtless because I have placed more reliance on His infinite goodness. My work grows more certain and more tranquil; ideas come into my head without confusion or tumult, calmly and in fair array.

I take great delight in combining and blending the study of ancient and modern Art. These two studies, joined hand in hand, lend each other marvellous charms; and this reminds me of a picture where Homer is seen yielding his hand to the guidance of a lovely child.

28*th.*—As often as we allow ourselves to penetrate to Nature, our soul opens to the most touching impressions. There is something in Nature, whether she decks herself in smiles during the bright days, or becomes, as in autumn and winter, pale, gray, cold and tearful, which stirs not only the surface of the spirit, but even its most secret recesses, and awakens a thousand memories which have, apparently, no connection with the external aspects, but which, without doubt, sustain a relation with the soul of Nature by sympathies to us unknown. This marvellous power I have experienced to-day, stretched in a grove of beeches, and breathing the warm air of spring.

29*th.*—Yesterday we extended our walk farther than usual; M. Gerbet, Mermet and I reconnoitered toward the north, as far as the heights of St. Helen. This is a sort of belvidere, whence the view extends over a vast horizon, southward and eastward, sombre and monotonous. Northward rise the shores of the ocean, describing a long line of blue. A little to the northeast—thanks

to a break in the hills—we had a glimpse of the bay of Cancale. Its waters, struck by the sunlight, glistened brightly in a luminous strip, enabling us to distinguish them from the bluish coast of Normandy. Yonder, westward, we could see Dinant with its lofty spires, half veiled in the haze that hangs over cities; in the distance, plains. In the same direction stood out against a dark background the white country houses, always in company with a clump of firs, which seemed like a huge black giant standing guard for the protection of the hearthstone. The pointed belfries, rising at intervals like the towers on an immense rampart, shot up around the entire horizon. I am delighted with this excursion for having opened to me this grand panorama, but above all for having given me a glimpse of the ocean.

30*th.*—

"*O! c'est un beau spectacle à ravir la pensée,*"

this vast circulation of life carried on in the ample bosom of Nature; life which springs from an invisible fountain, and swells the veins of this universe. Obeying its law of ascension, it mounts, ever purifying and ennobling itself, from kingdom to kingdom, to pulsate at last in the heart of man, the centre, where from every quarter its thousand currents meet. There it is brought under the touch of Divinity; there, as upon the altar burning with incense, it exhales itself, with sacrificial mystery, in the bosom of God. Methinks there should be profound and marvellous things to be said upon the sacrifice of Nature in the heart of man, and the eucharistic offering made in that same heart. The simultaneousness of these two sacrifices, and the absorption of the one in the other on the same altar, that rendezvous in humanity, of God, and

all created things, should open to view, it seems to me, grand heights and depths, *sublimitas et profundum.*

31*st.*—The love which speaks, sings, wails in one part of creation, reveals itself in the other half under the form of flowers. All this efflorescence, so rich in form, in color, and in perfume, with which the fields are resplendent, is the expression of love; it is love itself which celebrates its sweet mysteries in the bosom of each flower. The blooming bough, the bird which alights thereon to sing or to build its nest, the man who regards both branch and bird, are all animated by the same principle in different degrees of perfection. I read in Herder that the flowers perish immediately after fructification; that the birds lose their song, their blitheness, and some of them the brilliant colors of their plumage after the season of nests, and that man, after the period of passions, declines rapidly towards old age. There is food for meditation in this law of decay so intimately connected with the law of love and reproduction.

April 2*d.*—The clouds have dropped rain all day long. Sometimes it fell in violent showers, sometimes in fine mist, lightly rustling. The blackbirds, the hedge-sparrows, all the singing-birds whistle, chirp, and warble, notwithstanding. The clouds leave, at times, large clear spaces in the sky through which the sun pours floods of light. Then the bordering clouds catch the illumination; rank on rank they fly afar, but with tints fading and more indistinct as they recede, until the rays die away and are absorbed in an enormous mass which hangs motionless on the confines of the south-eastern horizon, brightly tipping its salient points, and leaving in shadow its irregular depressions.

4*th.*—A very rainy morning. Spring takes an ugly

turn. Toward one o'clock, the heavens uncurtained, and we had a few moments of clear sky and penetrating heat. Now the clouds begin again to encroach. I have seen their grizzly heads rising on the horizon ; in less than no time we shall have lost the blue. They are fleeing toward the east. I rather like this scudding of the clouds ; some seem to be eyeing each other and exchanging a challenge to a race.

5*th*.—A beautiful day as one could wish. Some clouds, but only as many as are needed to give picturesqueness to the sky. They assume more and more their summer forms. Their scattered groups repose motionless under the sun, like flocks of sheep in the pastures, during the heat of the day. I have seen a swallow, and I have heard the bees humming over the flowers. Seating myself in the sun, in order that I may be saturated to the marrow with divine Spring, I have experienced some of the impressions of my childhood ; for a moment, I have regarded the sky with its clouds, the earth with its forests, its songs, its murmurings, as I did then. This renewing of the first aspect of things, of the expression which our first thoughts put upon them is, to my thinking, one of the sweetest influences of childhood on the current of life.

My God ! what is my soul about to be thus taken up with such evanescent pleasures, on Good Friday, that day full of the thought of Thy death and of our redemption ! There is in me I know not what reprehensible spirit which excites great discontent, and drives me as it were to rebel against all holy offices and the collectedness of soul which are the due preparation for the great solemnities of our faith. We have been in special seclusion for two days, and I have done nothing but grow weary,

fretted with I know not what thoughts, and even becoming irritated with the customs of the retreat. Oh! how well I recognize here the old leaven of which I have not yet purged my soul!

10*th.*—We have left the great festival three days behind. One less anniversary of the death and resurrection of our Saviour! Every year is marked with its solemn festivals. When will come at last the festival eternal? I have witnessed something very touching; François brought us one of his friends whom he had converted. This neophyte has entered upon the exercises of the retreat, and Easter-day he communed with us. François was in the seventh heaven. He took great credit to himself for that. François is quite young; he is hardly twenty. M. de La M—— is thirty, and is married. There is something very touching and unaffeeted on the part of M. de La M—— in thus allowing himself to be led to God by a very young man; and this youthful friendship which makes an apostle of François is no less beautiful and touching. They are country neighbors, often labor together and write charming verses to each other upon the events of their domestic or friendly intercourse.

I have read *Lucrezia Borgia* with the liveliest delight. Everything that comes from Hugo, it is needless to say, is remarkable, and bears his strong impress. There is in the quality of his genius something so surprising, so dazzling, so bewildering, that after reading his work, be it drama, ode, or romance, one is left all amazed, the soul profoundly stirred, and the mind, to say the least, intensely excited. All his compositions set some of the innermost fibres of our humanity vibrating, or penetrate into some depth. His *Lucrezia Borgia* shows great progress.

Hugo is right when he says, in the preface, that this drama will be the principal epoch in his literary career. Indeed, it seems to me that his genius is, as it were, incarnated in this work. I find there in the highest degree of exaltation the two kinds of genius which rule in his soul: one ardent, bounding, excessive in its impetuosity, delighting in strange, frightful things, running after perilous and fanciful adventures in which blood will be shed, and encounters to make the hair stand on end; fatalist, because his vagaries carry him too high among the ideals of humanity without bringing him near enough to God; the other, calm, pleasant, full of tenderness, though not sentimental; seizing upon that in man which is purest, most exalted, most fruitful in virtue and gentleness. The *Odes et Ballades*, *Notre Dame de Paris*, *Hernani*, *Han d'Islande*, *Les Feuilles d'Automne*, are all stamped with this two-fold impress. These contrasts of his soul tend more and more to declare themselves, to place themselves more and more in opposition. He has made a statement of them in the notice of his new drama, and in the drama itself, has embodied them in a sublime creation. This dualism of his will work out some magnificent things; but he will do great injury if he wishes to make others adopt it as well as himself.

15*th*.—At last I have seen the ocean. C——* and I set out on Thursday, at one o'clock, with fine weather and a fresh breeze. We had seven leagues to go; but we were so enchanted to find ourselves marching towards the sea, that we took little thought of the length of the way. C—— uttered a cry of joy; this pedestrian trip reminded him of his journey to the South of Spain and Switzer-

* M. Edmond de Cazalès, son of the celebrated orator of l'Assemblée Constituente.

land, which he made on foot. He has a great fancy for this way of travelling. "In this humble equipage," said he to me, "the traveller mingles with the people, he goes into the inns to refresh himself or to rest, he sleeps in cottages, he accosts travellers like himself; these chance meetings on the dusty highway, these men who go each whither God leads him, sometimes bring about touching confidences." Then he talked with enthusiasm of the beautiful lakes and the grand mountains. At Châteauneuf, a charming little village, a fine view unfolded to us: on one side, to the north-west, were tiers of hills heavily wooded, each crowned with its white house, and, when the hills failed, La Rance flowed broadly on, dazzling as a mirror in the sunlight; on the other side, to the east, a well-cultivated plain extended in full view till it lost itself in the horizon. Patches of early verdure gleamed here and there, and by the fresh and ruddy color of the woods, one could see that the face of Nature was flushing with life and heat, and that she was ready to burst into bloom. This grand spectacle, embellished by all the enchantment of the sunlight, turned our conversation upon the study and worship of Nature. I was delighted to hear C—— express exactly what I have felt in the bottom of my soul on this subject. He added: "This great mystery of the goodness of God which is manifested to all, good and evil alike, by this display of the beauty and richness of Nature, is, to my thinking, an idea full of hope for the destiny of men in the other life." The thought of death which rose before us in the light of these reflections seemed so sweet and consoling that we fairly longed to die. We had stripped the face of Death of that hideous mask with which the terror of evil consciences has invested it, and he smiled upon us. Would it

not be the same with all, if they were stirred by a particle of love for heavenly things, or even by a little curiosity? Again he said to me: "I have been loaded with the greatest blessings; I have abused them shamefully, and yet I have such trust in God that I feel sure of my salvation." Our conversation travelled far on this line of thought. Then we fell to relating our inner life, our conflicts, our way of meeting life, etc. Little by little the conversation wandered to the poets, and love. C—— knows a great deal about Lamartine; he has the happiness to be his friend. He is skilled in the lore of love, he has loved long and much, and he loves still, but his enchantment begins to fade. Lamartine, Hugo, Nodier, and the rest brought us to the gates of Saint-Malo, and lulled the cruel pain in my feet cramped and tortured in tight boots. A little after sunset we found ourselves in sight of the town. It appeared to us suddenly at the turn of a street in Saint-Servan. What struck me, at first, was a row of vessels whose enormous hulls presented a black front and shapes hardly discernible in the shadow, but whose masts and rigging, rising into the sky, seemed, as it were, to embroider the evening light. Behind these ships we perceived a black mass surrounded with ramparts. It was Saint-Malo, a veritable nest for sea-birds; and further on, where we could distinguish nothing, arose a deep, monotonous voice; it was the ocean. We came into the town along the shore, thanks to the low tide; we took lodgings at *L'Hotel de France*, from which one has a view of the sea, and, for the first time in my life, I fell asleep with the ocean two hundred yards from my bed, and under the spell of its marvellous grandeur. The next day, straight to the sea. The tide was beginning to rise: we had time, however, to make the tour on foot of the rock

of Saint-Malo. What I experienced, as I cast my eyes over this infinite expanse, it would be difficult to express. The soul is not equal to this spectacle ; it shrinks before this vast phenomenon and knows no longer whither it goes. I remember, however, that I thought first of God, then of the deluge, of Columbus, of continents beyond the abyss, of shipwrecks, of sea-fights, of Byron, of René, who embarked at Saint-Malo, and who, borne away on the same waves that I was contemplating, fixed his eyes on the grated window where gleamed the lamp of the nun. For the rest, this first visit has been so short, and the impression it has left so startling and unmeasured, that no assured and settled conclusions have stayed in my soul. After three hours, which vanished like a moment, we started on a little craft which goes up the Rance as far as Dinan, and finished our journey on foot, with somewhat jaded bodies, but with happy hearts.

22d.—I have stumbled sadly, and my life has great trouble in recovering from the fall. All work is impossible with this sort of agitation. Everything is embittered with such a taste of gall in the mouth. Am I to blame? Somewhat so, perhaps. I ought not to feel these things so keenly ; but it must also be confessed that, without annihilating one's soul, without having compressed, cramped, wrung it in a way to leave in it no drop of the love of independence, it is difficult to stifle this cry of liberty, or of pride, call it by what name you will. This little adventure augurs very ill for my new life ; if so trifling an experience has put to flight my patience and all my good resolutions, I have not much to hope from my resignation in the future. Disenchantment has again taken hold of me ; all that smiled upon me yesterday makes faces at me to-day ;

all that was white is black, all that was clear is troubled; my soul

"*N'est plus qu'une onde obscure où le sable a monté.*"

It is a misfortune to be thus constituted. My happiness must be pure and rounded at every point; the least blemish disfigures it in my eyes, a black cloud in the sky spoils the whole heavens for me. It is folly, and the most unwise of all follies, for there is no such happiness in this world; but it seems to be my lot to be as poorly favored with illusions as with realities. *Fiat! fiat!*

23*d*.—The awakening of vegetation is prodigiously slow. I am almost out of humor with Nature, who seems to take pleasure in exhausting our patience. The larches, the birches, two lilac-trees that we have in the garden, the rose-bushes and the hedges of hawthorn, show the least bit of green; everything else is gloomy, and sleeps almost as in winter, save a few beeches which, more spring-like than their brothers, begin to flush with color against the dark mass of the grove by the pond. At any rate, the birds are all come; the nightingales sing day and night, the sun shines merrily, the winged insects hum and gambol in the air; everywhere is life and joy, except with me. I know not by what capricious contrast life has been more burdensome in these last few days than in the winter, when I was not a little troubled. I seem to myself like a dead tree in the midst of the green, green woods.

24*th*.—Finished reading the *Physiologie végétale*, by Candolle, three volumes octavo. The first treats of the nurture, the second of the reproduction of plants, the third of the influence of external agents. In spite of the

chemistry which is a principal feature in this work, especially in the first volume, and of which I do not understand a word, I have found a lively pleasure in reading it. Even before I had taken a half step in it, an entirely new world, a little vague to be sure, opened before me; but, however that may be, it is no small happiness to open up a new perspective in the contemplation of this world, and to get glimpses of the life and beauty of Nature. An infinite number of details have escaped me, but the impression which remains is precious. It has increased for me the charm in observing natural objects, and has turned my feet towards an inexhaustible source of consolations and of poetry. Oh! what must be the happiness of Heaven, since the slightest view of the order and vital energy of our diminutive globe delights us so profoundly! From another point of view, pain and vexation of soul are increased. We are always running our heads against phenomena we do not comprehend—vulgar phenomena, so common as to make the shock so much the more cruel. But we must take patience in view of the future, and accustom our souls to be satisfied with little.

25*th.*—It has just been raining. Nature is fresh, radiant; the earth seems to taste with delight the water which brings it life. One would say that the birds' throats are also refreshed by this rain; their song is purer, more gushing, more piercing, and vibrates wonderfully in the air now become exquisitely sonorous and echoing. The nightingale, the bullfinches, the blackbirds, the thrushes, the orioles, the finches, the wrens, all sing and rejoice. A goose, screaming like a trumpet, adds to the charm by contrast. The motionless trees seem to listen to all these sounds. Innumerable apple-trees in flower look

from a distance like balls of snow ; the cherry-trees, also in white, rise in pyramids or unfold in fans of flowers.

The birds seem at times to aim at those orchestral effects in which all the instruments mingle in a maze of harmony.

If it were possible to identify ourselves with spring, to carry this thought to the point of believing that all the life, all the love which leavens Nature culminates in ourselves ; to feel ourselves at once flower, verdure, bird, song, freshness, elasticity, delight, serenity, what would become of me ? There are moments when, by dint of concentrating one's thoughts on this idea, and of gazing intently on Nature, one seems to experience some such thing.

May 1st.—Heavens ! how gloomy ! wind, rain, and cold. This first of May gives me the idea of a wedding-day turned into a day for a funeral. Yesterday evening was all moonlight and stars—a blue sky, whose limpid clearness might send you to the seventh heaven of rapture. To-day I have seen nothing but showers streaming through the air in disordered ranks, driven furiously before a mad wind. I have heard nothing but this same wind wailing on every side of me with those pitiful and sinister wails which it catches or learns I know not where ; one would say it seems the very blast of misfortune, of calamity, of all the afflictions which I imagine to be hovering in our atmosphere, shaking our dwellings and chanting its mournful prophecies about our windows. This wind, whatever it may be, at the same time that it was affecting my soul so sadly by its mysterious spirit, was agitating external Nature by its material power, and perhaps also by something more ; for who knows if we are acquainted with the whole range of the mutual rela-

tions and intercourse of the elements? I saw this wind from my window doing his utmost against the trees, driving them to despair. He threw himself, at times, upon the forest with such impetuosity, that it was thrown into billows like a sea, and I expected to see the whole forest, pivoted on its roots, turn and spin like an immense whirlwind. The four great firs behind the house received from time to time such rude shocks that they seemed to take fright, and uttered, as it were, shouts of terror to make one tremble. The birds who ventured to fly were swept along like straws; I saw them—hardly breasting with a feeble struggle against the current, and only able at most to keep their wings stretched out—at last drifting rapidly down the wind. Those which stay in their hiding-places give feeble signs of life by beginning their song and suddenly stopping. The flowers look draggled and tattered; everything seems bowed with sorrow. I am more sad than in winter. In these days, there is revealed in the depth of my soul, in the innermost, the profoundest recesses of its being, a sort of despair altogether strange; it is like the abandonment of an outer darkness, where God is not. My God, how comes it that my repose is affected by what passes in the air, and that the peace of my soul is thus given up to the caprice of the winds? O! the truth is that I know not how to control myself; that my will is not one with Thine, and as there is no other thing it can lay hold of, I have become the sport of every breath that blows.

3*d*.—A joyful day, full of sunshine; a balmy breeze, perfumes in the air; in the soul, bliss. The verdure grows visibly; it has darted from the garden into the copses; it has got the upper hand all along the pond; it leaps, so to speak, from tree to tree, from thicket to

thicket, in the fields and on the hill-sides, and I see where it has already reached the forest, and begins to overflow upon its huge back. Soon it will have spread as far as the eye can reach, and all these wide spaces enclosed by the horizon will be waving and murmuring like a vast sea, a sea of emerald. A few days more, and we shall have all the pomp, all the display of the vegetable kingdom.

7th.—I have this moment received a letter and some verses from my dear François,* in reply to the piece which I had addressed to him. This friendship I have formed with him is delightful. François is one of the freshest, the purest, the most consoling souls that I have ever known. Moreover, he is a poet, and nothing else; a poet, not by effort and labor, as so many are, but by development and by a natural gift of expression. Poetry gushes from him like water from a fountain. His friendship is so much the dearer to me, and I understand his talent so much the better as I am far from deserving the one and rivalling the other. I am so little like him! but I find comfort in thinking that friendship springs from contrasts.

9th.—Five or six days of sun without the shadow of a cloud. The unfolding of the leaves is almost accomplished. Nature has decked herself in all her ornament. She has arrived at that unique moment of freshness, of purity, of grace, that must be seized as it passes, for it passes quickly. The leaves which opened yesterday are tender as the dew, and of a transparent green; I hardly dare touch them lest they should wither. The day before yesterday, however, I gathered a few with Élie—some beech-leaves, to make a dish of them, after the manner

* M. François du Breil de Marzan, author of "La Famille et l'Autel."

of the monks of St. Bernard. They are not bad; they have some flavor, but they are rather tough. I actually had some pangs of remorse for having plucked those poor new-born leaves. They would have lived their life, rejoiced in the sun, and rocked in the wind. I thought of all this while I was cutting them, and yet my hand went on still ravaging the boughs. Moreover, in committing this little act of cruelty, I had one of those interviews with Élie which come from time to time, always with a charming relief to the soul. As we went home with a full basket, we promised each other to pluck some leaves from time to time, to keep green the memory of our talk.

La Chênaie has the air of a gray and wrinkled old woman, transformed by the fairies' wand into a young and most winning girl of sixteen. It has all the freshness, all the brilliancy, all the mysterious charm of maidenhood. But, alas! how short a time will this last! M. Féli showed us yesterday some leaves already perforated and notched by the insects.

It has rained all night. The greenness and life augment. Towards seven o'clock I took a walk along the pond. The trees hanging over the water were dripping slowly, and each drop fell upon the smooth surface with a little plaintive echo. One would have said that the trees, having wept all night, were drying their tears.

"Do you know," said M. Féli to us day before yesterday evening, "why man is the most suffering of creatures? It is because he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite, and thus is torn asunder, not by four horses, as in the barbarous ages, but by two worlds."

Again, hearing the clock strike, he said: "If you

should tell this clock it must lose its head the next minute, none the less would it strike the hour until that minute came. My children, be like the clock; happen what happen must, always strike your hour."

22d.—There are no longer flowers on the trees. Their mission of love fulfilled, they are dead like a mother who perishes in giving life. The fruit has set; it feels the influence of the vital and reproductive energy which is to throw upon the world new individuals. An innumerable generation actually hangs on the branches of all the trees, on the fibres of the most insignificant grasses, like babes on the mother's breast. All these germs, incalculable in their number and variety, are there suspended in their cradle between heaven and earth, and given over to the winds whose charge it is to rock these beings. Unseen amid the living forests swing the forests of the future. Nature is all absorbed in the vast cares of her maternity.

23d.—We have succeeded in launching on the pond an old longboat which we have drawn out of the mire where it had been buried for more than a year. It has cost a good bit to repair it, but we are well paid for our trouble by the pleasure we take in our little voyages. This longboat belonged to a Swedish ship. Who knows in what seas she has sailed? Had she made the tour of the world, on this little sheet of water she must nevertheless soon go to decay.

June 12th.—These twenty days have passed wretchedly, and so wretchedly that I have not had the spirit to write a word here or elsewhere. My malady has returned with extreme violence, and has almost reduced me to despair. It is equal to my severest sufferings in the past. A letter from Eugénie, which reached me

during the most violent paroxysm, did me great good; but it was necessary that the crisis should have its course. God and good angels, have pity on me! Save me from such sufferings!

13*th.*—Except for the verdure, one would think himself in December. The fine weather has departed I know not whither. The sun will lose his good name; it is so cold that one shivers. This villainous west wind, with its innumerable flocks of clouds, has taken possession of the sky, and deluges us with rain. One seems to see up in the clouds Winter, passing with his sombre train. Nothing can be more disheartening than the green-growing earth, and the rich carpet of marvellous pattern, which Spring has spread for her beautiful feet, contrasted with the canopy of heaven all black with rainy clouds. I picture to myself a wedding solemnized in a church hung with black. Oh! besides, even in the finest days, what a difference between the sky of Brittany and that of our South! Here, Summer, in her days of high festival, has always something gloomy, veiled, shut in. It is like a miser making a display; there is always a churlishness in his magnificence. Give me our sky of Languedoc, so lavish in light, so blue, so widely arched!

15*th.*—"*Strange dream.*" I dreamed that I was alone in a vast cathedral. I seemed to be in the presence of God, and in that state of the soul in which one is conscious only of God and of oneself, when a voice arose. This voice—the voice of a woman, infinitely sweet,—nevertheless filled the whole church like a vast chorus. I recognized it at once; it was the voice of L——, "*silver-sweet sounding.*"

19*th.*—Three nights in succession the same figure has appeared to me. What am I to think of that?

23d.— "I know well that I am a poor, spiritless creature." O! how well said, my dear Bernardin! How well you have expressed the sentiment of a soul urged to rise above its sphere, and which, deeply conscious of its own weakness, utters the cry which you represent as addressed to Virginia,—I know well that I am a miserable creature! For a long time I have been repeating to myself these words; they are the summary of all my labors, of my whole life. Oh! if I were poor on this side alone, well and good; but my poverty is almost universal—yes, universal, and my brain will never work out any great good, neither for myself, nor for those who have the right to expect something from me. That it is which distresses me. I have mistaken my path. By taking a totally opposite direction, I could have done something useful. It is impossible to carry my attempts further than I have already done. That which I am now in the course of completing cannot be recalled. After that, who shall say what may happen to me? The invisible thread of Providence will always draw me to the better side.

28th.—I have many things to say; let me hasten to say them. I have an annoyance which would fain declare itself, and find vent spite of everything. My soul has suffered so much that I ought to be proof against pin-pricks, if it were with the soul as with the body, which grows callous under blows as iron hardens under the hammer. But with the soul everything goes against the grain. I should like extremely* * * * * *

July 4th.—I have received the finishing stroke. Behold me well and duly convicted of the most stupid

* The end of this sentence is erased in the original manuscript.

awkwardness that can be imagined. I look upon this incident as a judgment without appeal; and so much the better, in one way; it will teach me to estimate myself at my real worth. The rate of my valuation is henceforth fixed, and by experts. This is what comes of listening to vain thoughts. I kept saying to myself that sooner or later I should come to grief; I kept ridiculing myself; to-day, I have played the braggart, and here I am ignominiously driven back within my lines. Oh! I solemnly declare, by what I have suffered and by the respect I owe to my soul, that I have made my last sally. I intend to barricade myself in, immure myself against every temptation, as immovable as a boundary stone, even if I must pine away. I have somewhere read that thousands of animalcules swim freely in a drop of water; the circumference of my intellectual domain is about equal, I think, to that of the drop; and I am alone in it. Have I not reason to be happy without further disturbing my repose by dreams of ambition? Oh! yes, my little world, my invisible wee drop, thou art mine alone, and to thee alone will I henceforth belong. If I meet with some being as insignificant as myself who begs to be let in, I will gladly show him hospitality, I will receive him cordially, grateful for the sympathy which has prompted him to knock at my door; I will lead him all through my dwelling, exposing all details to his curiosity, as though it were a palace; we will talk with delight of a thousand little, little things, which will be, for us, most important affairs; pleasures, pains, labors, discoveries, philosophy, poetry, all these will be discussed in our interviews, but in proportions suited to the infinitesimal limit of our conceptions and to the diminutive scope of our souls. After having regaled ourselves to our hearts' content with talk and sympathy,

I shall conduct my guest as far as the door, and, leaving him a kiss and a good-by (two touching things which always go in company), I shall slide the bolts and keep snug within my microscopic universe, until the knocker again announces that a sympathetic heart waits without to send greeting to me.

17*th.*—Yesterday, I saw swallows flying in the clouds, an omen of fair weather which has not deceived me. I am writing at the close of a beautiful day, very brilliant, very warm, after a month and a half of clouds and cold; but this fine sun, which generally does me so much good, has passed over me like a quenched star; it has left me as it found me, cold, frozen, insensible to all external impression, and suffering, in the little of me that is still alive, barren and miserable experiences. My inner life pines every day, and I sink deeper I know not into what abyss, and already I must have reached a great depth, for light has almost ceased to come to me, and I feel a coldness creeping over me. Oh! I know well what it is that drags me down; I have always said it, and to-day, in falling, will say it more strongly than ever; it is the distressing conviction of my impotence, it is this fatal impotence, a tendency whose germ I brought hither, and which, during these eight months, has so strengthened that it has finished by crushing, overwhelming me, and has hurled me down a precipice whose depths are limitless. Yes, I am falling, that is certain, for I no longer see what I once saw; what I once felt, I no longer feel.

August 1*st.*—For some time past, like a converted sinner, I have forced myself to love what I hated, and to hate what I loved. I have solemnly forsworn poetry, contemplation, all my ideal life. I have promised myself to live contentedly in a little world of my own fashion-

ing, whence I have banished all the beautiful phantoms which peopled the world I formerly inhabited. I have thought that an existence circumscribed by a very narrow circle of fact, confined like the ant in a little hole hollowed in the sand, would be worth more to me than those adventurous but barren excursions of thought into a world which has so decidedly repelled me. But alas! it is decreed that my poor imagination shall have no place of rest here below. This little corner that I had chosen for it in the realities of life, in order that it might slumber there, refuses it shelter, as already the ideal sphere has done. What will become of me in this state of suspense between two spheres of action, in this region where thought sustains itself only because it is equally repelled by both?

12*th*.—I come here now only at long intervals, because sweet and edifying hours revisit me only from time to time. Such a chill has seized my soul that everything that comes in contact with it is instantly benumbed. I know not what paralysis has stricken me; I know not what indifference, a hundred times more painful than the most nervous sensibility, causes me to pass entire weeks without taking heed of anything.

14*th*.—After a long series of radiant days, I like much, on some fine morning, to find the sky hung with gray, and all nature reposing, in a sort of melancholy calm, from her festival days. It is exactly so to-day. An immense, motionless veil, without a single fold, covers the whole face of the sky; the horizon is circled with a heavy crown of blueish vapors; not a breath of air. Favored by this silence, every sound arising from the far-away fields reaches the ear—the songs of the laborer, the voices of children, chirpings and the peculiar cries of

animals, and from time to time a dog barking I know not where, and cocks who signal each other like sentinels. Within me, also, all is calm and tranquil. A gray and pensive veil has fallen over my soul, like the peaceful clouds over Nature. A great silence reigns, and I hear, as it were, the voices of a thousand sweet and touching recollections, which arise in the far-off past and come murmuring to my ear.

25*th.*—To-morrow it will be a year since I set out for R——, with Eugénie. Sweet anniversary! To-morrow also will be for me a day of travel. I am going to La Brousse to pass a few days of friendship and comfort with my dear François.

September 1*st.*—Alas! then, this is the way in which everything ends—regrets, tears! It is just an hour since I returned from a charming little journey, and I am weeping like a child, and am consumed with regret for a happiness which I ought to have enjoyed without clinging to it, knowing that it must be very brief; but it is always thus. Every time that I fall in with some little happiness, it is desolation to part from it, because I know that I must fall back upon myself and resume my painful routine.

3*d.*—Behold me struggling in a terrible situation, me with the weakest of all characters, the most timid of all wills.

26*th.*—The associations which cling to natural objects * * * * * * * * *

Ploërmel, *October* 1*st.*—I know not what stopped me short in the midst of my fine phrase, but I wished to express what came into my mind at the sight of a dense fog weighing upon the landscape. When the sun had risen a little above the horizon, I saw all this fog gradu-

ally brighten, and, penetrated with light, begin its upward movement toward the sky, where it soon vanished. Before a quarter of an hour had passed, it was beautifully serene; but, some time after the centre of the horizon had cleared, I still saw trails of fog sweeping along the distant crests like the last fugitives of a routed army, and it was to this that my association and my unfinished phrase related. Last year, on a similar occasion, I was also looking at the fogs rising into the sky and unhooding the mountains, and in these majestic regions, this spectacle assumed a character of infinite grandeur. One might almost believe he saw the primitive shadows fleeing away—God, like a sculptor, lifting with his hand the drapery which veiled his work, and the earth exposed in all the purity of its earliest forms to the rays of the primal sun. But this was not yet the essence of the association. Often, at the moment when the fog began to lift from the earth and become transparent, and when, my forehead pressed against the panes, I watched the changes of the mist, a blue dress— * * *

Heavens! how beautiful the sky is, this evening! As I was writing the last sentence, I turned my head towards the window, and my eyes were flooded with tints so soft, so delicate, so velvet-like,—I saw so many wonderful things in the horizon, that I could not refrain from throwing in here this exclamation of rapture. It is the autumn twilight in all its melancholy. The distant clumps of woods, their majestic plumes capriciously undulating, shut in the view with charming effect. The trees, isolated, whether by their position or by their great size, present an expression, a character, I might almost say features which seem to indicate, as it were, the mute passions and unknown things which exist, perhaps, under the bark of

these motionless beings. With their attitudes and the nodding of their heads, they seem, in the evening glimmer, to be acting I know not what mysterious scene. Each day, since I came here, the twilight has given me some of these magnificent representations.

A blue dress, as I said, flitted rapidly through the mist, and disappeared in those white shadows, like the blue bird which skims along the ponds and streams. Sometimes this apparition fled along, singing, and left behind her a flow of silvery notes, as it were, which rippled forth with ineffable melody. A quarter of an hour later, when the atmosphere had become clear, and the lingering trail of the fog was still creeping along the tops of the most distant mountains, I saw L—— enter with a slow step and a serious air, like a philosopher emerging from a revery.

I have wept over leave-takings last year and this, almost date for date. One must not compare these regrets—they are of too diverse a nature : they resemble each other only in their depth. Both are inexpressible. If I wished to draw a strong parallel between them, I would say that last year, in September, at two o'clock in the afternoon, under a clear sky, I said farewell to that happiness which is found at a certain point in the path of life, which leads you a few leagues, entertaining you with the enrapturing words of an angel, and then suddenly, let a cross-road appear, takes the left if you are taking the right, saying with a mocking sweetness : "Traveller! adieu! a pleasant journey, traveller!" And I should add that this year, in September, at four o'clock in the evening, in gray and foggy weather, I have embraced, at parting, a man whom I love with that ardent affection, like no other, kindled in the depth of the soul,

I know not by what strange power peculiar to men of genius. M. Féli has been my guide in life during nine months, at the end of which the fatal cross-road has appeared. The habit of living with him has made me heedless of what was passing in my soul; but since I no longer see him, I am conscious of a great laceration, as it were, at the moment of separation.

2d.—Six o'clock in the evening. It is the moment when recollections throng upon me by thousands, like the birds that flock at the same hour to the rendezvous they have appointed in a great poplar, where they chatter confusedly until night puts them to sleep. The sunset is enchanting. The clouds, which have escorted him to the west, open at the horizon, like a group of courtiers who see the king approaching, and then close after his passage. The sun having set, some of these clouds return and again mount the sky, arrayed in the most beautiful colors. The more sluggish remain at the gates of the palace, like a company of guards with gilded shields. These clouds do not quite touch the horizon: a luminous belt, tapering towards the extremities, runs between them and the blue line of the earth. A few slim poplars in the distance, which seem to spring from this blue line, and whose slender forms are clearly defined against the pure, luminous belt, represent the masts of ships at anchor on the horizon of the sea.

4th.—If I knew something of drawing, I should have brought back some sketch of our yesterday's trip to Josselin. I have at last seen an old baronial castle. Enormous towers, Cyclopean ramparts, inclose within their massive zone an architecture in appearance the most graceful, the most slender, the most frail, one of those dreams of the middle age, embroidered in air upon

stone with the delicacy of a fairy-needle. At twilight, take a leaf whose pulp has been devoured by insects, and by the dying light consider this net-work of delicate veins and fibres; you will have, as it were, a miniature of the fanciful traceries of Gothic art.

5*th.*—The most beautiful days, the most agreeable studies cannot allay in me this moaning thought which is the ceaseless refrain of humanity.

14*th.*—While I go on pursuing a swarm of vain thoughts, like a man who has nothing more to trouble him, my whole future is upset. They tell me that I must mingle again with the world. Strange caprice! I have caught myself a hundred times longing for its untried life, and to-day, when solitude and retirement have set me adrift, the world affrights me. Oh! the truth is, this was my niche; in spite of my whims and my freaks of worldliness, I cling to it with all my heart. I was beginning to see clearly into my destiny, and now once more all is unintelligible. Great God! 'tis cruel indeed! What would'st thou do with me, then, among men? What will become, in that whirlpool, of me, the most feeble of creatures? Oh! in this I well know my trial lies. I thought I was sufficiently convinced of my impotence, of my weakness, of the diseased and imperfect organization of my moral nature. Alas! it seems that I am not sufficiently convinced of it, since I am sent back into the world, that great destroyer of all inner joy, of all noble energy, of all innocent hope.

24*th.*—Truly, a ramble in the fields is ever a fresh delight. What happiness to fling off this dull chain of every-day life, and escape into the country, where one breathes freely; where one tastes the exalted pleasure of a few hours' liberty; where the heart is lifted and

the thoughts turn to contemplation; where one is enchanted to find one's humanity face to face with Nature. We made the circuit of a pond two leagues in circumference. It was long since I had taken so much pleasure in an excursion. The sight of water always charms me exceedingly, and to-day everything was as enchanting as I could wish. This pond stretches its beautiful form between two woods, whose borders describe lines graceful in their irregularity. At the close of day, there was something infinitely melancholy in this green and shadowy sheet of water, in the pale color of the woods beginning to cast their leaves, and the gray tint of the sky where flocks of crows and wild ducks were silently passing. A thousand sweet, sad thoughts came to me. I remembered that in my childhood, at this same hour, I loved to sit on the terrace at Le Cayla, and watch the passing birds seeking a shelter for the night.

Le Val, *December 7th.*—After a year of perfect calm, save internal storms, for which solitude is not to be blamed—for it has wrapped me in such peace and quiet, that a soul less restless than mine would have been deliciously cradled;—after a year, as I say, of this complete rest, my fate, which had led me into the holy retreat to find some repose, has knocked at the door to recall me; for she had not gone on her way, but had seated herself upon the threshold, waiting until I had recovered sufficient strength to resume my journey. "Thou hast tarried long enough," said she to me; "come, forward!" And she has taken me by the hand, and behold her again on the march, like those poor women one meets on the road, leading a child, who follows with a sorrowful air. But what folly to complain! and are there in the world no other sufferings than mine to water with my tears? I

will henceforth say to the sources of my tears, "Cease your flowing;" and to the Lord, "Lord, hearken not to my complaints," as often as I invoke the Lord and my tears in my own behalf; for it is well that I should suffer—I, who can obtain nothing in heaven by the merit of deeds, and who will obtain my little something only by virtue of suffering, like all feeble souls. Such souls have no wings to rise to heaven, and the Lord, who nevertheless wishes that they should come thither, sends them aid. He piles around them the thorny faggots, and causes the fire of anguish to descend; the wood consumed, it springs to heaven in the form of a white vapor, like the doves that used to take their flight from the midst of the dying flames of the martyrs' stake. It is the soul which has consummated its sacrifice, and which the fire of tribulation has made so etherial that it may soar to heaven, like a smoke. Wood is heavy and inert; but add the element of fire, and even a part of that rises to the clouds.

Lord, I am one of those souls. I must not then shed tears to extinguish the fires of my martyrdom. But I will shed floods of tears for those who suffer, and suffer unjustly. Above all, I will shed them for Him who is to-day a prey to the deepest bitterness, and who has already wrought so much good that He seems to abound in merit, without needing to gain new merits by the path of suffering. I will weep over Him and over those who do Him wrong—wrong that recoils on me. Jesus Christ having shed upon His murderers the priceless virtue of His blood, the least that men can do is to weep over their enemies.

I will hold sacred these tears and the treasured memories which I bear away from this blissful roof of

La Chênaie, which for a year has sheltered my life, hidden in the bosom of a priest whom men count among the glories of the earth, and whom the saints claim as one of them in heaven. Although my grief be very bitter, I will not hang my harp on the willows by the river, because the Christian, unlike the Israelite, should sing the song of God and of the Son of God, even in a strange land.

And see how full of goodness Providence is to me. For fear that the sudden transition from the mild and tempered air of a religious and solitary life to the torrid zone of the world, should try my soul too sorely, it has led me, on leaving the holy retreat, into a home standing on the confines of the two regions, where, without being in solitude, one still belongs not to the world; a house whose windows, on one side, open upon the plain where sways the tumult of man, and on the other, upon a desert where chant the servants of God. I wish to record here the history of my sojourn in it, for the days passed here are full of happiness, and I know that in the future I shall turn back many a time to reperuse their vanished joy. A religious man and a poet;* a woman so well fitted to him that they seem but a twofold soul; a child who is named for her mother, *Marie*, and the first rays of whose love and intelligence are piercing, like a star, the white cloud of childhood. A simple life, in an old house; the ocean morning and evening sending us its harmonies; finally, a traveller descending from Carmel to go to Babylon, who, laying down his staff and sandals, has seated himself at the hospitable table: here is mate-

* Hippolyte La Morvonnais, author of the *Thébaïde des Grèves.*

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rial for a biblical poem, if I could write things as I feel them.*

8th.—Yesterday the wind blew furiously from the west. I have seen the sea in commotion, but this tumult, sublime as it is, is far inferior, to my taste, to the view of the ocean calm and blue. But why say that the one is not equal to the other? Who could measure these two sublime sights and say, The second surpasses the first? We must simply say: my soul finds more pleasure in the calm than in the storm. Yesterday, one wide battle waged on the watery plains. To see the leaping waves, the thought would have been of those countless squadrons of Tartars, galloping incessantly over the plains of Asia. The entrance to the bay is guarded, as it were, by a chain of granite islets: it was glorious to see the surges rushing to the assault, and hurling themselves frantically, with frightful clamors, against the masses of rock; to see them take their line of attack, and vie with each other which should first surmount the black head of the reefs. The boldest or the most agile vaulted over with a loud shout; the others, lumbering on more awkwardly, dashed against the rock, flinging showers of spray of a dazzling whiteness, and fell back with a low, muffled growling, like watch-dogs beaten back by the traveller's staff.

We witnessed these wild struggles from the top of a cliff, where we found it difficult to withstand the buffets of the wind. The vast tumult of the sea, the clamorous

* In the first edition may be found a different version of the end of this passage, and of the four passages which follow. In this edition we have substituted, after the text of the *Green Note-book*, a version which the author had afterwards written on loose leaves, and which, without doubt, he himself preferred.

rush of the waves, the equally rapid, but silent sweep of the clouds, the sea-birds hovering in the sky and balancing their slender bodies between two arched wings that seemed to spread indefinitely, this entire assemblage of wild and echoing harmonies, all centering in the souls of two beings five feet high, planted upon the crest of a cliff, shaken like leaves by the violence of the wind, and hardly more visible in that immensity than two birds perched upon a clod of earth—oh! it was something mysterious and awful, one of those mingled moments of sublime excitement and profound meditation, when the soul and Nature, drawing themselves to their full height, confront each other.

From the height we descended into a gorge which forms a retreat for the sea, such as the ancients knew how to describe, where peaceful, murmuring waves come to sleep, while their wilder brothers lash the rocks and struggle together. Enormous blocks of gray granite, mottled with white moss, are scattered in confusion over the hill-side which has opened to receive this bay. So oddly do they lie, and so far over the edge do they lean, one would say that a giant had some day amused himself in casting them from the top of the bank, and that their course had been arrested wherever an obstacle had been encountered; some, a few steps from the point of departure, others, half-way down the bank; but yet seemed they rather suspended than arrested, or rather they seemed to be still rolling. The noise of the winds and waves which resounds in this echoing cavern sends forth the most beautiful harmonies. We made quite a long stay there, leaning, all wonder-struck, upon our staffs.

9*th.*—The moon and some stars were still shining, when the bell summoned us to mass. I like particularly

this morning mass said between the last gleams of the stars and the first rays of the sun.

In the evening, Hippolyte and I strolled along the coast. We wished to see what the ocean is like at the close of a gray and calm December day. The fog concealed the offing, but gave sufficient range of view to suggest the infinity of waters. We were posted on a point where stands a custom-house officer's hut, and we leaned against the hut. On the right, a wood, spread over the slope of the coast, displayed in the paling light its bare, ragged branches, rustling gently. On the left, far in the distance, the tower of the Ébihens now half vanished as it merged in the shadows, now reappeared with a faint light on its face, when a stealthy ray of twilight managed to slip through the clouds. The noise of the sea was calm and dreamy as in the most beautiful days ; only it had something more mournful. Our ears followed this voice which gradually sounded all along the coast, and we drew breath again only after the surge which had given birth to it had retired to make way for its successor. I think this extraordinary, vibrating song of the sea springs from the deep heavy voice of the surf, rolling up and breaking, united with the light and pebbly noise of the same surf as it retires, gently washing the sand and the shells. But why analyze this music. I shall never say anything worthy of the subject, for I understand nothing of analysis. Let me return, then, to sentiment.

The darkness was thickening about us, and still we did not dream of going, for the harmony of the sea went on increasing in proportion as all sounds of earth ceased, and night unfolded her mysteries. Like those statues which the ancients used to place on the promontories, we

stood motionless, fascinated, as it were, and spell-bound by the charm of the ocean and the night. We gave no sign of life save by raising the head when we heard the whistling wings of the wild ducks pass.

The course of my wandering fortunes has led me to a solitary cape of Brittany, there to dream away an autumn evening. There, for a few hours, were hushed all those inner voices which have never been really quieted since the first tempest arose in my bosom. There, all sweet and heavenly sadnesses flocked into my soul with the harmonies of the sea, and my soul wandered as in a paradise of reveries. Oh! when I shall have left Le Val and poured my farewell tears into the bosom of your friendship—when I am in Paris, where there is neither valley, nor ocean, nor souls like yours—when I go about alone with my sadness, and my soul sinks in despair, oh! what tears I shall shed at the thought of our evenings! For happiness is the fine, soft rain which penetrates the soul, but which afterwards gushes from it in springs of tears.

20th.—I have never enjoyed with so much intimacy and seclusion the happiness of home-life. Never has the perfume which is wafted through all the rooms of a religious and happy home so completely enveloped me. It is like a cloud of invisible incense that I breathe continually. All these minute details of familiar life, whose successive links constitute my day, are so many shades of a perpetual delight which goes on unfolding from the beginning to the end of the day.

The morning greeting, which renews in some sort the pleasure of my first arrival,—for we accost each other in nearly the same form of words, and besides the separation at night is somewhat typical of longer separations, like them full of dangers and uncertainties;—breakfast,

when we forthwith celebrate the joy of re-union ; the subsequent walk, a sort of greeting and adoration that we offer to Nature ; our return and our seclusion in an old wainscoted chamber, looking out on the sea, inaccessible to the noise of the house—in a word, a perfect sanctuary of labor ; dinner, announced to us not by the sound of the bell, which savors too much of the college or a fine house, but by a gentle voice ; the gayety, the lively jests, the rippling flow of talk rising and falling during the entire meal ; the crackling fire of dry brush around which we draw our chairs just afterwards ; the tender things we say in the warmth of the fire roaring as we chat, and if the weather is fine, the stroll by the side of the ocean which runs to welcome our party—a mother, her child in her arms, the father of the child, and a stranger, these last two each with a stick in his hand ; the rosy lips of the little girl who prattles to the tune of the waves, the tears that she sometimes sheds and the cries of childish grief on the border of the sea ; our thoughts when we see the mother and child smiling at each other, or the child weeping and the mother seeking to soothe her with the sweetness of her caresses and her voice ; the ocean, which goes on rolling continuously its waves and noises ; the dead branches that we cut, as we stray hither and thither in the copses, to make a quick and cheerful fire on our return ; this little experiment in wood-craft, which brings us near to Nature, and makes us think of M. Féli's peculiar love for the same occupation ; the hours of study and poetic out-pouring, which carry us along to supper-time ; this meal to which we are summoned by the same gentle voice, spent in the same pleasures as the dinner-hour, but less boisterous, because evening softens and subdues everything · the evening, opening with the sparkle of a

cheerful fire, and passing in alternate reading and talking, to die away in sleep ; to all the charms of a day thus spent, add that indescribable, angelic beaming, that halo of peace, of freshness and innocence diffused by the blond hair, the blue eyes, the silvery voice, the laughter, the little knowing poutings of a child who, I feel certain, makes more than one angel jealous, who enchants you, bewitches you, makes you dotingly fond, by a simple motion of her lips—such is the power of helplessness !—to all this add finally the dreams of the imagination, and you will still be far from attaining the limit of all these domestic delights.

21*st.*—For some days the weather has been at its worst. The rain falls and the wind blows in gusts, but with such fury that everything seems to be given over to these terrible hail-storms. Three nights in succession have I been startled from my sleep by one of these squalls, which occur regularly towards midnight. They assault the house so furiously that everything in it shakes and trembles. I half rise in my bed and listen to the tempest as it passes, and a thousand thoughts which lay sleeping, some on the surface, others in the depths of my soul, awake in excitement.

All the noises of Nature : the winds, those fearful blasts from an unknown mouth, which play upon the numberless instruments of Nature, whether in the plains, on the mountains, along the hollows of the valleys, or massed in the orchestra of the forest ; the waters, whose scale of voices ranges over so infinite a compass, from the soft rippling of a fountain over the moss to the grand harmonies of the ocean ; the thunder, the voice of that sea which heaves over our heads ; the dry leaves, which rustle to a passing human tread or that of a playful breeze ;

in short (for one must put an end to this enumeration, which might be infinite), this continual utterance of sounds, this ever-undulating murmur of the elements, expand my thoughts into strange reveries, and throw me into mazes whence there is no issue. The voice of Nature has acquired such empire over me that I rarely succeed in freeing myself from the habitual pre-occupation which she imposes, and attempt in vain to feign deafness. But to wake at midnight, with the shrieks of the storm, to be assailed in the darkness by a savage and furious harmony which subverts the peaceful sway of night, is something incomparable in the experience of strange impressions. It is a terrible delight.

MORDREUX, *January 2d*, 1834.—Day before yesterday evening I was finishing a letter to Frédéric thus :

"I am writing to you in the last hours of 1833. There is an indescribably solemn sadness in this death-struggle of the year. My heart is full of strange and mournful thoughts, for the tempest roars without, and the year expires in the convulsions of a gloomy and stormy night."

I have suffered strangely this whole evening. The incredible rapidity of life's passage, the mystery of our destiny, the terrible questions which doubt at times addresses to men the most settled in their belief—in short, this state which for me returns often enough, in which the soul, like Lénore, feels itself transported with loosened rein to I know not what dismal regions,—all this has taken hold of me. The same evening, I received confirmation of a report which had been circulated for some days : the defeat of a great man, who has surrendered his pen as heroes surrender their swords, indignation in his heart and tears in his eyes. Poor M. Féli ! you have

often pressed me to your bosom, I have breathed your spirit, and my timid and undeserving glance has penetrated to the bottom of your heart; for there were days when you became so transparent, so limpid, that one could look into your very depths, as into the clearest fountain. Oh! what grief seizes me when I see you so misunderstood, and suffering so much evil for all the good you fain would have done! What man has been better able to say to the Lord: "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up"? and you have been counted among those whom Satan sends to sow dissensions in the house of the Lord! *

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Le Val, *January 20th.*—I passed three weeks at Mordreux, † in the bosom of a family the most equable, the most united, the most blessed of heaven than can be imagined. And yet, in this calm, in this sweet monotony of domestic life, my days were inwardly so excited that I think I have never experienced such uneasiness of heart and brain. I know not what strange tenderness had taken possession of my whole being, and drew tears from my eyes for a mere nothing, as happens to little children and old men. My heart swelled at every moment, and my soul overflowed in secret bursts, in effusions of tears and internal communings. I felt, as it were, a soft languor that weighed upon my eyes, and at times bound all my limbs. I ate with loathing, although urged by

* The end of the page is effaced in the original manuscript, and the two following leaves have been torn out, no doubt by Guérin himself.

† At the house of M. de la Villéon, father-in-law of Hippolyte La Morvonnais.

appetite ; for I was pursuing thoughts which intoxicated me with such sweetness, and the happiness of my soul communicated to my body an ease so indescribably tender, that it recoiled from any act which would blunt so keen a pleasure. I forced myself to resist this dangerous exaltation, this impetuous feeling, whose peril I realized ; but I was too much in its power to escape, and, judging from all appearances, it was all over with me if I had not found a powerful diversion in the contemplation of Nature.

I set about studying her even more closely than had been my wont, and by degrees the excitement subsided ; for there issued from fields, from waves, from woods, a mild and wholesome virtue which penetrated my being, and changed all my transports into melancholy dreams. This blending of the calm suggestions of Nature with the stormy ecstasies of the heart will beget a state of mind which I would fain retain, for it is a most desirable state for a restless dreamer like myself. It is like a rapture so subdued and tranquil that it carries the soul out of itself without taking from it the consciousness of a lingering and somewhat stormy sadness. Another result is that the soul is insensibly steeped in a languor which deadens the keenness of every intellectual faculty, and lulls it into a half-sleep void of all thought, in which, nevertheless, it is conscious of the faculty of dreaming the most beautiful things. At other times, it is like a cloud which spreads its soft tints over the soul, and casts that pleasant shadow which invites to meditation and repose. The unrest also, the ardent activities, all the turbulent crowd which bustles in the citadel of the heart, becomes silent, sometimes betakes itself to prayer, and always ends by composing itself to slumber. Nothing can more faithfully represent this

state of the soul than the evening this moment falling. Gray clouds, whose edges are slightly silvered, are spread uniformly over the whole face of the sky. The sun, which vanished a few moments ago, has left behind him light enough to relieve for some time the black shadows, and in a manner to tone the falling darkness. The winds are hushed, and the tranquil ocean sends up, when I go out on the threshold to listen, only a melodious murmur, which breaks on the soul like a beautiful wave on the beach. The birds, the first to be won by the influence of night, take their flight towards the woods, and their wings are heard rustling in the clouds. The copse which covers the whole hill-side of Le Val, which has echoed all day with the warbling of the wren, with the cheerful whistle of the woodpecker, and the various notes of a multitude of birds, has no longer any sound in its paths and thickets, save the shrill cry of the blackbirds chasing each other in their play, after all other birds have their heads under their wings. The noise of man, always the last to be hushed, gradually dies away along the fields. The universal hum ceases, and one hears scarcely a sound except what comes from the towns and hamlets, where, far into the night, is heard the crying of children and the barking of dogs. Silence enfolds me ; everything seeks repose, except my pen, which haply disturbs the slumber of some living atom asleep in the leaves of my note-book, for it makes its own little noise scratching these foolish thoughts. Well! let it cease, then ; for what I write, have written, and shall write, can never be weighed against the sleep of an atom.

Ten o'clock in the evening. A last walk, a last visit to the sea, to the coast, to all this magnificent landscape which has enchanted me for two months. Winter smiles

upon us with all the charm of Spring, and gives us days which make the birds sing and hasten the leaf-budding of the rose-bushes in the garden, the sweet-brier in the woods, and the honeysuckle climbing along the walls and rocks. At two o'clock we took the path which winds so gracefully among the flowering furze and coarse grass of the cliffs, runs along the wheat-fields, turns towards the ravines, creeps between the hedges, and rises boldly towards the most lofty rocks. The end of the walk was a promontory which overlooks the bay of Quatre-Vaux. The sea shone in all its brilliancy, and broke a hundred feet below us with a sound which swept over our souls as it rose to the heavens. Towards the horizon, the fishermen's boats unfolded their sails of a dazzling whiteness against the azure, and we glanced alternately from this little fleet to another more numerous, which, to the sound of singing, was rocking nearer to us. This was an innumerable crowd of sea-birds gayly catching their fish, and rejoicing our sight with their shining plumage and their graceful poise upon the waves. These birds, these sails, the beauty of the day, the universal serenity, gave a holiday air to the ocean and filled my soul with a joyful enthusiasm, in spite of the background of sad thoughts which I had brought to our promontory. However, I abandoned myself with all my power of vision to the contemplation of capes, rocks, islands, forcing myself to take from them, as it were, an impression, and to transfer it to my soul. Returning, with regret at each step, I trod with sacred emotion that path which has so often led me in such delightful companionship to such beautiful meditations. This path is so full of charms when it comes to the copse and runs between the overhanging hazels and a hedge of scraggy boxwood! There the

joy which I had caught from Nature vanished, and I was seized with the sadness of parting. To-morrow will make of this sea, of these coasts, of these woods, of the many delights that I have enjoyed, a dream, a floating thought that will be merged in other thoughts. And in order to take with me as much as possible of the spirit of these sweet regions, and as if it had been in their power to give themselves to me, I inwardly supplicated them to imprint themselves upon my soul, to infuse into me something of themselves which should never pass away. At the same time I put aside the branches of the box, of the bushes, of the tangled thickets, and I thrust my head into their midst, to breathe the wild perfumes lurking there, to penetrate to their inmost being, and, as it were, talk heart to heart with them.

The evening passed as usual in conversation and reading. We retraced the happiness of the past days. I have drawn a faint picture of it in this note-book. We gazed upon it pensively, as on the picture of the loveliest, the most cherished dead.

Hippolyte has gone to bed. I write this in the solitude and silence of night, by the side of an extinguished fire. I have been listening at the door to the sounds from without. They are few : the ocean has retired into the distance, he is calm, he sleeps, we hear him not. The Arguenon with broad windings flows along the strand, the moon paces up and down its current, and its shallows, where the water is ruffled, send up to us a gentle murmur. The breeze scarcely sighs in the wood, and all else is still.

Adieu, adieu, beloved abode ! If thou lovest me and doubtest my constancy, hearken to this which shall re-

assure thee : in losing solitude I lose the half of my soul. I go out into the world with a secret horror.

CAEN, *January 24th.*—I have just been exploring some of the streets of this city by the faint light of the street lamps. What have I seen ? The black phantoms of churches and their belfries, whose bulk alone I could distinguish ; but the mystery of night, which enfolds them and defines not their dimensions as would the broad light of day, adds to their sacredness, and has touched me with a sentiment which is better, I believe, than that which springs from forms. My thought soared indefinitely towards heaven with those spires, which seem to have no end, and roved in terror all round those gloomy naves, as around tombs. That was all. The streets were crowded ; but what is a crowd in the night, or even in the day ? In the night I prefer the noise of the winds, and, during the day, those great assemblages now silent, now roaring, which are called forests. Moreover, I met some of those men who always prompt me to hasten home as soon as possible, *students* so-called, who passed in jaunty attire, and wore on every feature an indescribable expression, which intimidates and puts me to confusion. O my note-book ! my sweet friend, how I felt that I loved thee in escaping from this multitude. Behold now I am thine, although the night is far spent, and I am all sore with fatigue ; wholly thine, while I tell thee my troubles and talk to thee peacefully in secret. Can I ever sufficiently live over memories still steeped in tears, and which will remain forever incorruptible in my soul ? That good Hippolyte and his adorable Marie ! I had said farewell to her ; she had answered in words of the most touching kindness ; I had faltered out a few more words and was hastily descending the staircase, thinking

that she had not crossed the threshold and that all was over, when I heard a new farewell to me from above. I raised my head and saw her leaning over the baluster. I answered feebly, very feebly, for her voice had deprived me of the little strength I had to restrain my tears.

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PARIS, *February 1st.*—My God! close my eyes; preserve me from seeing all this multitude, the sight of whom gives rise in me to thoughts so bitter, so discouraging. Grant that, in passing through it, I may be deaf to noise, inaccessible to those impressions which overwhelm me when traversing the crowd; and, to that end, place before mine eyes an image, a vision of things that I love, a field, a vale, a moor, Le Cayla, Le Val—some natural object. I will walk with looks fixed upon those sweet forms, and thus shall pass and feel no rude jostling.

17th.—O purity of the fields! I was constantly ascending from Nature to God, and descending from God to Nature. That was my inner life, mingled with some melancholy, some heart-flutterings which, nevertheless, only softened or quickened the current of my thoughts without changing them. Nothing impure entered my soul, and I felt the powers of my mind growing; for when the inward man is pure, his thought rises unfettered, ever approaching the source of all intellectual strength. I was beginning to rise above my discouragements, and to acquire that beautiful and noble trust of a heart which feels itself at one with God, and which cannot be cast down so long as it rests in this faith.

March 16th.—I am passing through a strange experience. Perhaps I have never had stronger proof of my intellectual impotence than in these last weeks, and I

pursue my course as if nothing were the matter; I am bravely writing numerous articles which are accepted—by what miracle I know not—by a little daily paper. In truth, I know not which most to admire, the excessive kindness of the men who welcome such poor essays, or my incredible assurance in launching such nonsense into the world. Whence comes, then, this extraordinary courage? Oh! I can acknowledge to myself the feeling which inspires me; it is pure, it is praiseworthy, and it so rarely happens that I can look one of my thoughts in the face without lowering my eyes, that I must here record that which gives me an energy so unwonted. I work solely for my father and my friends, all my strength is in them, and it is not I who work, but they who work in me. It is true that during three years they have urged and spurred me in vain, and that in this was cause for dying of shame and remorse, if my soul could nurse a sentiment—that of repentance, for example—up to some degree of energy.

23*d.*—Oh! let me hasten to retain here as much as possible of the raptures of this day; let me hasten to write that this day I have enjoyed a sublime happiness, that of a man who has glimpses of the delights of heaven, that I have felt powerful for good, and full of love for God and men. Yes, I must hasten to write it, for these noble exaltations last but a short time in my soul, for to-morrow——*

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It seems to me intolerable to appear before men other than I appear before God. My severest torment

* Here there is a blank in the manuscript; a leaf is wanting.

at this moment, is the opinion which superior people entertain of me. It is said that at the last judgment, the secrets of the conscience shall be revealed to the whole universe: I would it might be thus with me from this day, and that the sight of my soul might be exposed to all comers.

April 20th.—O my note-book, thou art not for me a heap of paper, something insensible, inanimate; no, thou livest, thou hast a soul, an understanding, love, kindness, compassion, patience, charity, sympathy, pure and unchangeable. Thou art for me what I have not found among men, that tender and devoted being who attaches himself to a feeble and sickly soul, who enfolds it in affection, who alone comprehends its language, divines the thoughts of its heart, sympathizes with its sorrows, partakes of the intoxication of its joys, lets it rest upon his bosom, or, in his turn, leans upon it for rest; for we bestow upon one we love the greatest consolation when we take sleep, or repose, leaning upon his breast. I need a love like that, a pitying love.

There is nothing in me which can excite the love that we see so much of in the world, the love of equal for equal, the love that exists between congenial souls—souls which attract each other, because they have mutually recognized each other as great and beautiful, like two stars descrying each other from opposite poles, and moving to a conjunction across the spaces of heaven. To be loved as I am, I must meet a soul willing to incline towards its inferior; a strong soul that would bend the knee before the feebler, not to worship it, but to serve, to console it, to protect it as one would a sick man; a soul, in short, gifted with a sensibility as humble as profound, which would divest itself of pride, so natural even

to love, to bury its heart in an obscure affection, which the world would in no wise comprehend; to consecrate its life to some weak being, morbid and introspective; to be content to concentrate all its rays upon a flower without brilliancy, weak and always trembling; which would bestow, indeed, perfumes whose sweetness charms and penetrates, but never those which intoxicate and exalt to the happy delirium of rapture.

May 1st.—Always a burden, always forced to borrow my existence. The lips of the newly-born infant have energy enough to take the breast, and I, in the prime of my youth, have not sufficient vigor to draw my nourishment, to imbibe a little life.

7th.—A soft rain. There was not a breath in the air. The rain was falling quietly, with a monotony which was not without its charm. The foliage bent under the water of heaven, and each drop, as it struck the leaves, imparted to them a little vibration which ceased only to be renewed. It was as if a universal thrill had seized the tufts of verdure, a tremor of delight and joy. The air, saturated with a warm moisture, and laden with all the perfumes of May, induced languor, and surfeited by mere excess of softness and warm odors.

At present, all my interviews with Nature, that second Consoler of the sorrowful, take place in a little garden in the street Anjou-Saint-Honoré, close by Pépinière street. Day before yesterday, in the evening, I had passed my arm round the trunk of a lilac, and was singing softly J. J.'s song: *Que le jour me dure.* This touching, melancholy air, my posture, the calm of evening, and, more than all, this habit that belongs to my soul of taking up at evening all its sadness, of surrounding itself with pale clouds towards the end of the day,

threw me back upon the deep, vast consciousness of my misery, of my inner poverty. I saw myself miserable, very miserable, pitiable, and utterly incapable of a future. At the same time, I seemed to hear murmuring, far and high above my head, that world of thought and poetry towards which I so often spring without the power ever to attain to it. I thought of those of my age who have sufficient breadth of wing to reach it, but without jealousy, and as we here below look upon the elect and their bliss. Still my soul burned, panted, struggled against its weakness. There was in it something of the despair, and the fruitless, passionate efforts of those unfortunates who can only dream of love, and, in their dreams, wildly press to their bosom a phantom that scorches. The trunk of the lilac I was straining shook under my arm; I seemed to feel it move spontaneously, and all its shuddering leaves uttered a soft sound, which seemed to me like a language, like a murmur of lips which whisper words of consolation. O my lilac, at that moment, I was pressing thee as the sole being in this world against whom I could lean my faltering nature, the only one capable of supporting my embraces, and compassionate enough to offer a support to my misery! How have I repaid thee? With a few tears that fell upon thy roots!

18*th.*—My inward misery increases, I dare no longer look within myself.

25*th.*—I shall be blamed, undoubtedly; but is it in my power to express anything except what I feel? Experiences accumulate; there is no longer room for doubt. I have no refuge but in resignation. I well foresaw, when I put my foot upon the first step of my attempts and efforts, that I should esteem myself happy to meet, after

having had recourse to everything, not a foothold of moderate extent, where I could establish my life and breathe at ease, but even a little hole to cower in and keep myself hidden until the end. My expectation has been realized to the letter: I have no shelter but resignation, and I run to it in great haste, all trembling and distracted. Resignation! it is the burrow hollowed beneath the roots of an old oak, or in the cleft of some rock, which gives shelter to the flying and long-hunted prey. Swiftly it slinks into the dark and narrow opening, crouches in the farthest corner, and there, all bent and gathered into itself, its heart throbbing with rapid beats, it hears the far-off baying of the pack, and the cries of the hunters. Here I am in my burrow. But, the danger past, the hunted thing returns to the fields, comes forth again to see the sun and liberty; it goes back joyously to its carpet of wild thyme and of savory herbs, which it had left half-cropped; it resumes the habits of its wild and wandering life. Grains, vines, copses, shrubberies, flowers, its bed in the tufted grass, or in the moss under a thicket, its naps, its dreams, its vague and sweet existence—all is again its own; and I, so long in terror, will go forth no more; I will remain forever burrowing in my subterranean dwelling. Need I complain of this? Why should I? In the depths of my hiding-place I find safety, an assured calm, and as much room as my soul needs for its little evolutions. A soft and subtle ray glides in to me, and sheds about as much light as illumines the cell of a bee. Provided only the wind brings me from time to time a few whiffs of wild perfumes, and my ear catches some distant notes of the melodies of Nature, what have I to regret? Does the spider, swinging at evening on its thread between

two leaves, trouble itself about the flight of the eagle, and the wings of all the birds? And is the imagination of the bird brooding her young, well sheltered in a thicket, troubled with regret for the sports of her liberty, and the gentle undulations of her flight high in air? I have never had the liberty of the bird, nor has my thought been as joyous as her wings: let me rest in resignation, as the bird in her nest.

26th.—Why vex myself by incessantly asking, What shall I make of my life? I have applied it to many things, and it has taken hold of none; with an apparent fitness for work, I remain in a useless and passive attitude, almost without resource. But who knows if, all superfluous as I seem in society, God does not derive from me some good I know not of—if He has not, without my knowledge, endowed me with some virtue, some secret influence over the welfare of men? Every time that I am haunted by this fatal thought of my uselessness and my weakness, I will take refuge in this: that Providence finds some good in me, and makes me serve some hidden use, only exacting from me my consent, and a faith in this mission which He has not chosen to reveal to me. By this acquiescence of my will, the imperceptible good that I do is quickened; I thereby sow the seeds of merit, which will germinate in secret, and will bloom in heavenly rewards in the fields of a better world. The paths which conduct mortals to heaven are diverse; some seem to be widely divergent, and, nevertheless, meet in a common centre; each has its windings, its crooks, its mysterious labyrinths. Amid all the roads which men follow, there is, perhaps, a greater number than is generally believed that open into heaven, but I am satisfied that all are difficult. However it may

be, I advance, with full confidence, in my own path, which is very dark. This constant thought, that I am ignorant of the good work for which the Lord designs me, will lead me to respect all creatures, to bow before all living things, to conduct myself on the earth as in a temple, where all things fulfil a sacred ministry, where the atoms of dust in the chinks of the pavement are so many priests, whose innumerable legions prostrate themselves in prayer.

June 10*th.*—When I enter upon a subject, my self-love imagines that I am doing wonders, and when I have finished it, I perceive that it is a servile imitation only, made up of odds and ends of color ground on the pallet of the masters, and coarsely mixed on mine. But why torment myself incessantly with this thought? I do my best; I go as far as I can, and care not a whit for what the world may say. This philosophy is of recent date. In the last eight days, I have made great progress in self-denial, resignation, and the mortifying of every self-complacent thought. I have gone back into my little shell, and am striving to make the best of my quarters, with the resolution of leaving it no more. I ridicule my imagination, which, like the tortoise, would fain make excursions in the air; I insult with impunity my aspirations, which, timid as they are, are bursting with spite; I delight in taunting the magnificent *me*, which vainly rebels against the spur of this inward sarcasm; like the scorpion in the furnace, I bite myself, in order that I may sooner die.

13*th.*—And am I not a laughing-stock, a toy, something that little children follow with their mockery, a being whom the weakest confront, whom the ten-year-old boy crushes with his foot, like the worm trodden under

the wheel, before I can even turn? All the children I meet seem instinctively to divine the imbecility of my character, and treat me at once as the master his slave. Their first thought, as soon as they see me, is to make sport of me; to tease me with the innocent malice peculiar to their age. I do not resent it: it is natural to them to use for their amusement anything weaker than their weak hands.

The Park (*Eure et Loir*), *June 25th.*—How express what I have experienced in again plunging into solitude, a solitude that recalls the country of my sweetest dreams —Brittany? For the country where I now am slopes towards the west, and one breathes here an air which might be an emanation from my good country. The fields wear nearly the same look; here are the sunken roads, overgrown with grass; the paths along the wheat fields; the rustic fences, the patches of furze, broom, and stunted oak: they make excellent butter here, and cider flows abundantly. I enjoy this resemblance, I devote myself to the study of it, I call up a thousand charming memories, which, to my taste, is one of the sweetest pastimes of the soul. However, my restless thought slumbers not; it goads me and keeps me always panting, but its stings are less poignant, and less tormenting. Relieved from a burden of material cares, which were stifling me, my fancies soar more freely; but what matter? There are always cares, doubts, perplexities; only I will look higher for them, and under a more vague and less material form. They are chimeras of the future, which appear and disappear, searchings into my destiny, brilliant hopes and failures, a chain of all the strange thoughts which can be conceived in a brain little fertile, but always active, in an imagination which believes, and believes

not in itself, which lashes and caresses itself, which welcomes all dreams, all impressions, without resting in any, and is ever in quest of something new. When then shall I subdue it and come down to reason, pure and simple? If I could yield to the wise counsels which come to me from all sides, I would stow away all this rubbish of foolish thoughts, and though divested of my dreams, I would tranquilly follow in the track of other men.

26th.—The sweetest hospitality, a communion with Nature, to whom I so freely resort, the absence of all restraint, all thraldom; the realization of that happiness, half savage, half social, of which I used to dream so ardently in Paris, in my dark, pent-up chamber,—I possess all these blessings, and I cannot wholly abandon myself to the enjoyment of them. Once here, I fancied I should fall into the half-sleep of a uniform, free, and natural life; but how little I know myself, if I hope to taste anywhere full repose, and to be lulled by the sweet sound of the harmony that one hears within him when all parts of the soul are in accord! My faculties, intellectual as well as moral, are too ill-balanced ever to attain to an equilibrium; I am here sheltered from every external shock. Freed from the tumult of society, beyond the reach of those blows which, when I live in the turmoil of the world, wound me, irritate me, or overwhelm me wholly, good order would resume its sway within me if my trouble came altogether from the side of society. Society has much to do with it—I know it by the great feeling of relief that I experience whenever I withdraw from it; but the nature of my soul also has a large share in it, as solitude proves to me as soon as I return to it. Then certain uneasy, restless powers awake and excite, for my torment,

the faculty of bitter suffering—the rancor, the intense spite, the insensate wrath, which abates and is soothed under the powerful charm of the country. The grateful sensations which flock about me in solitude, the animating and absorbing influences of Nature, flatter me and caress the surface of my soul; but in penetrating to the interior, they become irritants, which increase the power of this dreamy and restless faculty.

"They are also to the weary and aching soul, what the morning dew is to the flowers half withered by the heats of the preceding day: it revives and refreshes them, but often only to deliver them, yet more sensitive, to the ardors of the mid-day sun." O. L. V.

July 16th.—I begin to observe within myself something which somewhat softens my private misery, and which will end, perhaps, in raising me in my own eyes. It is the progress of my soul in the love and knowledge of liberty. It was in 1831 that my heart first leaped at that name. Until that period the weak and sluggish temper of my soul had left me in insensibility and ignorance of the delights of liberty. My soul at length came to manhood, and the first enthusiasm of this living and powerful faculty bowed before the virgin form of liberty. At twenty-one, she moved my soul as at fourteen a young girl might have disturbed my heart, with sensations wholly new, confused, and deliciously troubled. I passed two years and a half taken up with the timid and vague reveries of a first love, which knows not itself and requires little nourishment. But for some months I have experienced violent agitations of soul, and from time to time I feel flashes of a powerful and intoxicating heat pervading my bosom. Careless and wavering dreams assume consistency and take shape in action; insensibly

they are transformed into strong, full thoughts. What were formerly floating and luke-warm desires are now ardent thirsts. Instinct has become passion.

I have arrived at a critical period in my inner life. By a strange stirring of my thoughts, by the almost instantaneous growth of more than one faculty within me, by the quickened motion of my inner life, I recognize the approach of a revulsion I have long invoked. Hitherto I have given up to my caprice and to chance the guidance of my faculties ; they seemed so weak and promised so little that I did not judge them worthy of other masters ; but they have agreeably deceived me. These pale, wretched children have taken on vigor and bloom ; uncertain and shrinking in constitution, they have grown bold, and have freed themselves by a quick and sudden spring from the languors of their long infancy. I must begin to think of their destiny. An internal revolution is necessary : I must enter on an active life, and say farewell to my beloved listlessness, sweet companion of my childhood and youth. Alas ! it will not be without tears. At last I must seriously exercise my faculties, and it shall be under the inspiration and the fire of the thought that fills my soul, burning like a passion—the thought of liberty : that is to say, of the greatest happiness and the greatest progress of humanity. I shall only be an ant bringing a straw to the building up of the future ; but however small my forces, they will none the less be animated by a great and holy thought, which never allows the soul it dwells in to falter, which purifies, enlarges it, and suffices for its happiness, a thought which belongs to all and of which every one is proud ; the thought which drives the age before it : the most beautiful after that of God, the thought of liberty.

When I go out to walk in a pleasant mood and free from all care, I feel dawning in the depth of my soul an unwonted, a singularly lively joy. The farther I go into the country, it rises and diffuses itself, now rapidly, now slowly, according to the incidents by the way and the time it takes to reach the finest part of the walk. Once there and established to my liking, and always in a way to receive most vividly on all sides impressions from the surrounding horizon, this growing feeling of indefinable delight attains its fulness, diffuses itself through my being, and fills it to overflowing.

August 4th.—Paris is about to take possession of me once more, but it will find me stronger, more courageous, in better condition in every way, to support the pressure of life. During the six weeks spent here without study, without exertion, letting my soul wander at will, living in idleness, but in a contemplative idleness open to all impressions, I have made great progress. What does my intellect need to enrich and enlarge it. Books? persistent labor? profound researches in science? No. A free life, a country which wraps me in verdure and warm emanations, through which I walk now impetuous and hurried, now quiet and loitering, and all the light, the clouds, the ravishing sounds and the universal rapture which revolve around a man who spends whole days leaning against a tree and occupied solely with observing the life of Nature. Under these conditions, my mind has been placed, and the very sap of its being, warmed by the potent atmosphere which surrounded it, has gushed forth in a mighty stream. I have seen many clouds detach themselves from the mass of darkness which weighs upon my soul, and which has only lately been stirred by the breath of my new-born intelligence. Every day I throw

off some prejudice. The love of liberty is taking possession of my character and is beginning to lay in it the foundation of a solid and rational independence, which confirms me in myself, and prepares for me powers of resistance against the rude shocks of that combat so ingeniously arranged and planned,—called society. I will plunge into the *mêlée;* I know not against whom I shall jostle; but I am well assured that bruises and wounds will rain upon me. What matter? I am disconcerted by a mere nothing, a breath upsets me, a child tyrannizes over my timidity; what then will happen when my life is bound up with that of men all bristling with prejudices, proud and absolute in their servile, narrow, inflated opinions, their hands always ready to strangle the weak? The result will be that they will disturb my timid nature, that they will make me suffer horribly in the weak and unfortified regions of my soul; but their darts will not pierce elsewhere. While from appearances they reckon me vanquished, my soul, in its inner temple of independence, will lovingly press to its bosom its free and generous opinions, its faith, emancipated from all the petty chains with which it is loaded by many a man, who says to me: "Leave there those men and their sayings, and steep thyself once more in the memory of the days of freedom, when thou wast wont to wander at will through the fields, the heart swelling with delight, and loudly chanting hymns to liberty; when thou enjoyedst a day all idleness from beginning to end—from the gay breezes of morning to the warm perfumes of evening, lying under a pear-tree, careless of everthing, and bidding defiance, in thy mocking ease, to the tyrants of all kinds fastened like vultures to the side of humanity."

PARIS, *August 20th.*—To leave solitude for the crowd;

the green ways, and the solitary, for the obstructed streets with their clamors, where instead of a breeze circulates a current of warm, tainted human breath ; to pass from quietism to turbulent life, and from the vague mysteries of Nature to the harsh reality of society, has ever been a terrible change for me, a return to evil and misfortune. As I go on my way, and advance in the discernment of the true and false in society, my inclination to live,—not as a savage nor a misanthrope, but as a solitary man on the confines of society, on the borders of the world,—is strengthened and extended. The birds flutter, pilfer, build their nests about our dwellings, they are like fellow-citizens of the farms and hamlets ; but they fly in the sky, which is immense ; the hand of God alone distributes and measures out to them the day's food ; they build their nests in the heart of the thickets, or hang them on the tops of the trees. Thus I would wish to live, hovering about society, and having always behind me a field of liberty, vast as the heavens. If my faculties are not yet formed, if it is true that they have not attained their growth, they will develop only in the open air and under a somewhat wild exposure. My last sojourn in the country has confirmed my conviction on this point.

During my six weeks' vacation, I have lain fallow in the most complete inaction. Scarcely, to break the uniformity of the *far niente*, did I pursue some lazy reading, stretched under a tree, and more than half my attention distracted by a breeze, or a bird threading its way through the woods, by the song of a blackbird, a skylark, or what not, by all that passes in the air that is vague and enchanting for a man lying on the fresh turf, under the shade of a tree, in the midst of a country thrilling with

life and sunlight. But this repose, this *accalmie*, had not destroyed the play of my faculties nor arrested the mysterious circulation of thought in the most vital part of my soul. I was like a man under the spell of a magnetic sleep: his eyes are closed, his limbs relaxed, all his senses sealed; but, under that veil which covers almost all the phenomena of physical life, his soul is much more alive than in a waking state of natural activity; it pierces the thick darkness, beyond which it sees certain mysteries laid bare, or enjoys the sweetest visions; it communes with apparitions; to it the gates of a wonderful world are opened. I tasted two pleasures at once, one of which alone would have sufficed to fill my being to overflowing, and yet both found place and expanded freely without clashing or confusion. I enjoyed both at once and each as distinctly as if I had possessed but one; no confusion, no mingling, no marring of the vivacity of the one by the activity of the other. The first consisted of the unspeakable sentiment of a repose perfect, continuous, and verging on slumber; the second came to me from the progressive, harmonized, slowly-cadenced movement of the inmost faculties of my soul, which expanded in a world of dreams and thoughts, which, I believe, was a sort of vision—in vague and evanescent shadows—of the most secret beauties of Nature, and of her divine forces. When the hour of departure broke the charm, and I resumed the habitual sentiment of my being, I found myself poor and forlorn as before; but by the more animated march of my thoughts, by a more subtile delicacy of sensation, by a marked dilatation of my moral and intellectual forces, I knew that my six weeks of idleness were not lost, that the flow of strange dreams which had flooded my soul had uplifted and borne it to a higher level.

I came back to society with this joy, amply set off, however, and almost deadened by the sadness of my heart, which came back heavy with regrets and languor. I parted from the country as from a sweetheart, and I confess that I cannot explain the astonishing resemblance of the sadness she has left me, to that of love.

22d.—I have received a letter from Onésime; as I opened it, a perfume of flowers and of the country issued from all its folds. At first, I thought it enclosed one of those breezes which flutter about all day in the meadows and gardens; but I soon changed my mind when, on turning the page, I scattered over the floor blue and yellow petals, rose leaves and blades of grass. There were people in the parlor; I blushed, I was confused; I thought they were about to question me, perhaps ridicule what gave me so much pleasure. I should not have known what to answer, I should have faltered, I should have been embarrassed in my speech. And then, moreover, how is it possible to make foreign natures understand the value of a blade of grass in a letter, the charm of this touching childishness, of this exquisite simplicity? Happily, no one took notice; they were talking; I let it pass and made haste to pick up my treasure by stealth, like a thief. Society, such as it has become, has so altered men and destroyed in them the native instincts of the soul, that those who have escaped the general contagion and preserved in its purity the simplicity of natural tastes, are forced to hide themselves, to steal away, to envelop themselves in a sort of modesty.

26th.—My soul shrinks and recoils upon itself like a leaf touched by the cold; it retires to its own centre, it has abandoned all the positions from which it looked out. After some days of struggle against social realities,

I was obliged to fall back and retire within. Here I am circumscribed and blockaded until my thought, swollen by a new inundation, rises above the dike and flows freely over all its banks. I know of few events of my internal life so formidable for me as this sudden contraction of my being after extreme expansion. In this condensation, the most active faculties, the most unquiet, the most restless elements, find themselves seized and condemned to inaction, but without paralysis, without decrease of vitality; all their impetuosity is shut in, and under constraint. Pressed and crowded they struggle against each other, and all together against their barrier. At these times all the feeling of life I have, is reduced to a deep, dull irritation alternating with paroxysms; it is the fermentation of so many various elements becoming inflamed and exasperated by their forced contact, and making repeated efforts to burst forth. All the faculties which brought me into communication with the outside, the distant world—all those brilliant and faithful messengers of the soul which go and come continually from the soul to Nature and from Nature to the soul—finding themselves pent within, I remain isolated, cut off from all participation in the universal life. I am become like an infirm man, deficient in all his senses, solitary, and excommunicated from Nature.

September 7th.—In conversation I pass for nothing. I commonly derive from it only discomfiture and bitterness. In conversation I compromise my inner life, whatever is best in me. To sustain the flow of talk, I throw into it my cherished thoughts, those I love most dearly and prize with the greatest tenderness. My timid and faltering speech disfigures, mutilates them, throws them into the broad light of day disordered, confused,

half-clothed. When I withdraw, I gather together and lock up my scattered treasure, but I put away my ideals sorely handled, like fruits fallen from the tree upon stones.

9*th.*—At this moment there is a mingling in my soul, a mingling of bitter and sweet, a confusion of honey and gall, a strange medley. For some days, my mind, still so little regulated, has been seized with a feverish restlessness, which makes it go and come from pole to pole, which will not allow it to settle and repose in the centre of an order of ideas or beliefs, but carries it rapidly from region to region, and, in passing, holds it suspended over all abysses. I taste a strange delight in feeling my soul snatched up, like that prophet that an angel carried away by the hair, and traversing vast regions with frightful rapidity. But what do I bring back from these wild wanderings? Lassitude, bewilderment, an access of giddiness, and yet, beneath all that, a secret self-satisfaction which takes pride in the fiery voyage, and unconsciously stirs the growing passion of my soul for these perilous adventures. In the country, also, in the mild days, the ravisher came to take my soul; together they went far away, but with a more measured flight and through regions more serene, though no less vague and shifting: as to-day, my soul, on its return, knew no longer what to think of things, but in its perplexity there was less of disturbance, less of uneasy pre-occupation.

19*th.*—O truth! appearest thou not at times to me like a luminous phantom behind a cloud? But the first wind dispels thee. Can it be that thou art only an illusion before the eye of the soul? Reason and faith! When these two words shall make but one, the enigma

of this world will be solved. Meanwhile, what is to be done? As I write, the sky is magnificent. Nature exhales fresh breezes full of life, the world rolls on melodiously, and amid all these harmonies wanders a sad and startled thing—the mind of man—disturbed by all this order, which he comprehends not.

21*st*.—After all, what is our business here below? To lead a useful life. That settled, what matter what instrument God puts into a man's hands to improve the time, pen or hammer? To accept without hesitation every situation to which the power of my soul or of my hands is adequate—such is the resolution to which my soul clings, seeing that all takes flight and vanishes around it; seeing that the earth crumbles under my feet. But can I rely upon a resolution of my soul? Who will assure me of its constancy, after a thousand fluctuations, after a thousand projects formed, abandoned, re-formed? I lose myself; my sluggish and indifferent will breathlessly pursues my soul, which takes the wings of the most delicate dreams, of the most fleeting illusions. Such is my life: it is composed of serious plans, which are always changing; of vain dreams, which are permanent; of long intoxications of the imagination, and of ridiculous scenes between my will and my soul, unfettered and swift of flight as a savage; and in the quick and core of my life, ever the acute suffering or the dull uneasiness, as the disorder increases or decreases.

26*th*.—I accept with a passive resignation the recoil of the hopes I have sent forth. I begin to care little enough for the course of my external life and for any pleasure, more or less, I may meet in my path. When I have bread for my hunger, and water for my thirst, I,

more than any other, ought to be content and silent. Idle and altogether superfluous in society, I have no right, in the common distribution, to any but the portion vigorously necessary to the support of my life.

28*th.*—The elements are confounded within and without. An immense chaos, Nature, men, science, the universality of things rolls its waves against my soul lost in the foam and roar like an isolated point, a rock in the midst of the sea * * * * * *
I sustain the shock of a boundless surge; how long shall I hold firm? If I bury myself in your bosom, mysterious waves, will it be with me as with those knights who, drawn down to the bottom of the lakes, found marvellous palaces there, or, like the fisherman in the fable, in falling into the sea, shall I become a god?

I formerly doubted myself, who am an imperceptible point. The doubt at first confined to this imperceptible point, has broken its barriers, it covers the world; an atom has expanded over the entire universe. I used to suffer only in myself, now I suffer in all things.

29*th.*—The germinating grain puts forth life in two contrary directions, the plumule grows upward, the rootlet downward: I would like to be the insect that takes up its quarters and lives in the rootlet. I would take my post at the extreme tip of the roots and watch the powerful action of the pores drawing in life; I would observe the life passing from the fruitful bosom of some earthy atom into the pores, which, like so many mouths, evoke and woo it by melodious calls. I would be witness of the ineffable love with which life rushes to the arms of the being who invokes it, and of the joy of that being. I would be present at their embraces.

October 22*d.*—For three weeks, I have lived an outer

life, which devours all my days, even to the crumbs: a revolution in my habits, a sudden transition from the carelessness of dreams to the breathlessness of action. All this stir of bustling life absorbs a certain portion of my thought, but it is a floating portion, that I abandon to every wind, like the stray folds of a cloak. I do not feel its loss. These thoughts are the waves that come up on the strand: the land drinks of them, man dabbles in them, the sea abandons them to any who desire them. Thus my life, on its borders, is taken up with the cares and anxieties of active life; but on the broad surface, nothing touches it, no one draws from it, its waves lose nothing except through the continual evaporation of their waters, breathed upon by an unknown power.

November 23d.—Two months of action, of participation in human weariness. But in bending to my work, in digging out the furrow where I have just sown the first sweat of my brow, the lassitude I have felt has been only physical. My soul comes back from its day's work with the freshness of an awakening. It is not long since it shuddered and fainted when the thought of an external action to be accomplished passed before it. If, at the moment when necessity urged me with its lash into the *mêlée* of men of action, like those oriental soldiers who are driven to battle with whips—if, I say, at that moment, my soul had found itself hovering on the brink of action, it would have recoiled and fallen. Happily, a little before this moment, it had started on a course which must carry it far from the battle-fields of action. This departure was not sudden nor undesigned; breaths which had inspired my soul from time to time, like the first freshness of a breeze, had given token of its new direction. In due time it set out; behold it out of danger. Joyous as cap-

tives who with vigorous oars leave behind them a barbarous coast, it leaps eagerly along its flight, it withdraws itself to regions unknown to all and to itself, but it is sure to reach them, because they attract, and an infallible presentiment of the wonders they reserve for it, entertains it on the way.

December 10*th*.—Of what nature am I, then, that new conditions against which I can make no preparation, are continually coming upon me, that at each moment is revealed some new infirmity in some quarter where I had no anxiety? To-day this poor imagination by which I live habitually, whence flows all that circulating life in me of unknown joys and of those hidden transports of which nothing goes forth to be wasted on the outer world,—this poor imagination is drained. It will be eight days since my inner life began to diminish, the stream to fall, lowered by so perceptible a decrease that, after only a few days' exposure to the sun of this work-a-day world, it has become a little thread of water. To-day I have seen the last drop vanish.

I take in its broadest sense the word imagination: it is for me the name of the inner life, the general appellation of the finest faculties of the soul, of those which reclothe tangible ideas with imaginative adornment, as likewise of those which, turned towards the infinite, are perpetually meditating the intangible, and shaping the invisible into images of unknown origin and indescribable form. This talk is a little metaphysical and widely at variance with the known psychologies; but, for that matter, I trouble myself little about men and the arrangements they have made of our faculties; their systems, which shackle me, I break, and, thus free, go as far from them as possible, to reconstruct a soul and a world to my liking.

I certainly cannot believe that our most living faculties die like a flickering torch, and that all the interior sources of inspiration close suddenly, as if struck by a curse. But it is undeniable that the life of the soul is interrupted, that the stream of secret joys suspends its course to give passage to swarms of bitternesses and unknown desolations. I suffer from this terrible invasion. I listen within myself, and I hear no more what used to charm me. Various subtle murmurings, undulating harmonies of distant choirs, reverberations of the secret songs of Nature, all this flow of gentle sound has ceased. Like a man who walks in the night provided with a torch, objects seemed, as I advanced, to take on a brilliancy at once vivid and soft, and, in this light, all forms, toned as well as sharpened, seemed to bathe as in their native element, and to taste I know not what delights, which animated their countenance, and gave to them beauties hitherto unseen. To-day I cast only a shadow, every form is opaque and struck with death. As in a walk in the night, I advance with the consciousness of my forlorn existence, amid the lifeless phantoms of all things.

My inner life resembles that circle of the hell of Dante, where a crowd of souls rush on in the train of a standard borne rapidly forward. The multitude of my thoughts, like the crowd of shades, swift, tumultuous, silent, is borne ceaselessly toward a fatal phantom, an undulating and luminous form, of irresistible attraction, which flees with the swiftness of an uncreated apparition. False guide, without doubt, for its flight is too alluring not to draw my soul into some cruel snare; but, whatever may happen, I yield to the lure. Like a child travelling, my mind smiles incessantly at the beautiful regions it sees within itself, and will never see elsewhere. I dwell with the

interior elements of things, I climb the rays of the stars, and the current of the streams, to the very bosom of the mysteries of their generation. I am admitted by Nature to the inner sanctuary of her sacred abodes, to the point whence issues Life Universal; there, I detect the cause of motion, and I hear the first song of created life in all its freshness. Who has not caught himself watching the shadows of the summer clouds gliding over the landscape? As I write, I am doing some such thing. I see moving over this paper the shadow of my fancies, like scattered flakes, ever swept before the wind. Such is the nature of my thoughts, and of all my intellectual stores—a little floating vapor just ready to vanish. But even as the air delights in condensing the exhalations from the waters, and in peopling itself with beautiful clouds, my imagination seizes the emanations of my soul, heaps them up, moulds them at will, and lets them drift along the current of that secret breath which pervades all intelligences. This is the happiness inherent in my nature, an ethereal, evanescent happiness, which often melts under my kisses, and dissolves in my embraces. Moreover, neither my serenity nor my torment is of long duration; alas! nor are my resolutions lasting. Whatever of philosophy or of practical reason there may be in my soul, groans and suffers. Like a ship that has spread too much canvas, I hold a wild, blind course through life, sustaining at every hour the most cruel damages.

In a picture, we love, we admire the features of the unknown man, of the shepherd, it may be, dreaming on the mountain. He represents intelligence in the midst of creation, the deep, sonorous echo in the centre of melodies, the divine mirror athwart the path of the in-

numerable images which God has set in motion from the uncreated void, a floating garb of symbols which we name the Universe. The real personages, the shepherd and I, are poor creatures who see the clouds floating, and hear the wind whistling by mere instinct, and as a pastime of solitude.

January 26th, 1835.—I have acted my little drama under your eyes; you have followed its changes, and heard its noise with a tender interest which has been the source of all my courage. And yet, what did you look at? What one follows with the eye on summer evenings: a winged insect that whirls and spins in the air, with a light buzzing of its wings. Like the insect, my thought madly drives a fitful flight which goes no whither. I have acquired philosophy enough to walk resolutely in the practical life, and to raise myself above certain attacks which would formerly have overthrown me. But the control of my thought does not belong to me. It has no other guide than an untiring instinct of flight, far from the common abode, as if liberty was to be found in escape, and truth at the end of an endless journey. Moreover, notwithstanding the smoothing of the ways in my interior life, I feel scarcely any less weariness of life; for restlessness of thought is as good, or as bad, as uncertainty of the morrow. Poetry dwells no more in my soul, I no longer enjoy its familiar intercourse; by the absence of a sweet burden, by the chilling of my habits of imagination, I know that she has departed, and besides, I hear her voice afar off, at a high pitch, but already faint and almost annihilated by the distance. Sometimes I think she calls me, having found beyond the darkness a better place than this; for, to-day, I hope everything from the side of the impenetrable, and some-

times she seems to be bidding me good-by. For the rest, what matters it, if what we call imagination, poesy, leaves or takes me? That can neither retard nor hasten the course of my destiny; and whether or not I may have foreseen it here below, I shall none the less some day behold what is reserved for me. Ought I not rather, ignoring all these anxieties, to apply myself to enlarging my positive knowledge, and to prefer the least luminous thread of certain truth, to the vague glimmers in which I am lost? A man who is sure of any mathematical truth whatever, is more advanced in the comprehension of the true, than the most beautiful imagination. He has acquired an inviolable possession in the domain of knowledge, where he can dwell to all eternity. The poet is driven from exile to exile, and will never have any certain abode.

February 2d.—We lost Marie the 22d of January, at nine o'clock in the evening.

After the happiness of dying before those one loves, I know of nothing which better indicates the favor of heaven than to be admitted to the pillow of a dying friend, to follow as far as one can with him into the shadow of death, partially to enter into the profound mystery in which he vanishes, to take from his countenance faithful and incorruptible impressions; in short, to gather a treasure of sad and secret thoughts, which may last through the longest life.

All this I have seen only under the representation that the soul pictures to itself, as it best can, of that which takes place far from us. Poor Marie! I have imagined the spectacle of your end; I have contemplated eagerly, through the shadows of this terrible dream, all that transpired between you and death; I

have seen your calm and peaceful features, your sweetness and the beauty of your soul yet visible upon your lips, and undimmed by suffering. This vision is sometimes disturbed, and disappears, but it soon returns ; for, swayed by a potent spell, I call it back. In its longest absences, it gives place to another sight, unclouded by the shadows of death : Marie appears to me with vague and indistinct features, floats before my imagination, and, without touching the earth, guides me to the haunts she loved, in which we have so often wandered together.

She has vanished from the visible world ; she belongs to the regions of thought ; she is accessible only to that powerful faculty which rises from our souls to the spiritual abodes, climbs to them secretly in the shadow, and descends accompanied by a sweet phantom. How often have our dreams mounted together to those dim and obscure dwellings which attracted us by their mystery ! How many times have they gone to knock lightly at the gates of that world of intelligences and pure spirits ! And now thou art mingled, absorbed in this ocean of spiritual life ! By the same process as of yore, my thought now enshrines thee in its bosom ; it pictures thee as of the same essence with those sweet dreams of mine which used to meet thine and together seek the same heaven.

I try to understand this—to reconcile the thought which seeks her on earth with that which seeks her here no longer. I re-form painfully the habits of my imagination which used to travel with so much delight towards the beloved wilderness ; I am forced at every moment to turn it from its way, to put it on the new path it must henceforth take ;—strange and bitter confusion of two

worlds, terrible disturbance of the soul following after that soul which has changed its abode! But no; I am happy to gaze in the direction where she has vanished, to carry all my communings, all my aspirations, towards the invisible world, which has snatched her from us. Who will make me a sharer in the treasured thoughts gathered at the final hour? Who will admit me to those mysteries in which I would fain wrap myself forever? I am hungry for sorrow, and for that mournful knowledge*

* * * * * *

9*th.*—The work is finished; doubt no longer troubles; I am convinced. I have again clothed with mourning that charming scene in my recollections. The sweet countenance whose outlines trembled faintly in my memory,—for time and absence spread over the most cherished features a sort of vapor which partially dims and confuses them,—the sweet countenance has resumed its place before my eyes; but my imagination, like death, has veiled it with pallor, has touched the lips with a dying rose-tint, and closed the eyes forever. I have broken the image of its earthly existence, I have effaced it from the external world. Ideas have changed places; an actual life, in its completeness, has been taken from my soul, and I see coming, instead, the incorruptible images and forms of the unknown world which lies about us. I press lovingly to my heart and scan closely these new apparitions which wear beloved features. I invoke Divine aid that I may gather to my side as many as possible of these secret guests to whom grief hastens

* Following this fragment, a leaf has been detached from the original manuscript, and several lines on the top of the next page have been effaced.

eagerly, confirmed in its infatuation by them. Still, the sense of the terrible blow is not softened; in vain the spirit retires into the shadow to sigh apart and give no outward sign; it is oppressed by the necessity of tears. Then, if my eyes refuse, I say, like Hippolyte: Thou no longer weepest; thou recallest, then, no more the happy days of a year ago with Marie?

12*th*.—Of which world shall we dream? What secret beauties of Nature can attract and fix the mind more powerfully than the regions in which Marie has vanished? I know she is there—that the shadows of the world of spirits conceal her from us. How attractive have these shadows become, and what a charm for me in attempting the approaches to this unknown world! I advance; I imagine, as I can, the abode of the pure spirit; I strive to figure to myself a soul restored to its element, the secrets of its new life, and all the details of its immortal condition. The imagination, carrying its earthly habits into its dreams, clothes the beloved spirit in a form, and I see Marie with the features of this world renewed in heaven. But often, in the very creation of these sweet phantoms, grief, dispelled for a moment, revives; it rushes upon me from the midst of the most soothing visions.—She has become, then, only a thought, I say to myself; she is, then, accessible only to the dreams of my soul! I resign myself reluctantly to the heavy, human sadness of this idea. Sometimes I escape from it by beginning again the pilgrimage of memories. The light and noiseless steps of my imagination tread again the loved paths. Like Paul, wandering in his island, I return, led by an inevitable attraction, to the scene of the shipwreck.—Some days ago, I found, in a library, when I was alone, a book from which

we had read in some of our long social evenings. I opened it. How express what was suggested by it, and the vividness of the memories which slumbered in those lines, as in furrows? How many tears I shed over this good Collin d'Harleville, so gay, so charming! Thus everything is turned to mourning. Return, all ye memories, sweet emanations of the past, shadows of what has vanished, come back into my soul, as, at nightfall, the little birds and the bees, which have wandered far over the fields, fly back and gather to their haunts. Return all; night has fallen.—Thus I give relief to the intense regrets which no consolation may dare to approach. I surround them with this murmuring multitude of memories. They listen to their mingled voices, and study their features, varied by a thousand shades of meaning; the tumultuous flow of painful thoughts by degrees slackens, and for a time subsides, so far as to become a languid stream of melancholy.

March 24th.—Formerly my grief dissolved in tears; it has become barren. The bitter waves held in solution some drops of balm; to-day, the pure liquid leaves me no sweet deposit, to sip with secret lingering.

I used to picture the soft and tender gleams of twilight to be sweet and beneficent particles deposited by the stream of burning light which had just flooded the heavens. And with a profound delight I used to watch the sky deepening into that ethereal yellow whose delicious melancholy gave it an air of repose. What passed at sunset I used to trace in myself at the same hour, and the evening and I sank to sleep with the same soothing of grief.

O quieting sweetness of these tranquil pageants, sym-

pathies of my soul with the spirit of natural scenery, whither have ye fled? I am alone. I no longer feel nor experience anything but my life. The sharpness of an existence profoundly perturbed by a thousand internal poisons—such is the sole flavor of my days.

27*th.*—I know well that, with resolution and effort, I might succeed in moulding my mind to a severe logic, to a certain regular management of my faculties, to the consecutive study of useful truths. But I have received so little power of deduction, so little method and logical comprehension, that it will always be a feeble and sickly labor.

Calmness in the thoughts indicates the force of the intellect. But all my efforts are only creations without result, convulsive, breaking off abruptly at every minute, like the speech of a madman. I lose myself; a direful disturbance unsettles my brain; the vivacity of certain ideas intoxicates it; confused with I know not what imaginings, it falls to the ground. But of what use is complaint? If I were a laborer, perhaps I should accuse the weakness of my arms, and the rapid exhaustion of my breath. I have never in my life turned up a clod, and I am easy on that score. If, limiting the labor of my intellect to what my condition requires, I had not put its strength to full proof, I should be easy in that quarter also. But it is done; the shortest way is to take comfort. Why not also reascend the current of habit, and thus reënter into the primitive calm? Let me forever close the outlet, foolishly opened to the secret waves within my soul! Let them sleep there! These waves—they are only a few drops; surely I need not fear their storms.

If I have still some steps to take here below, I would

like to take them in quiet. I know neither whence I am, nor whither I am going. I must at least walk tranquilly in the peace of an ignorance which will not long wait to be enlightened. True wisdom consists in enduring what cannot last.

There is more strength and beauty in the well-kept secret of oneself and one's thoughts, than in the unfolding of a whole heaven that one may have within. Thus was it with Marie; the wealth and sweetness of her soul revealed themselves only by the charm of her words, and the peaceful enchantment which her existence shed about her. It is not that I am discouraged. Although I am still subject to certain returns of this old infirmity, I have subdued it so far that it no longer impedes the positive progress of my life. The nature of my intellect, eager and restless, and in no way gifted for the strong and severe operations of reasoning, forbids all hope of a suitable progress in the philosophy of this world. But this class of investigation taken away, I see nothing worthy an effort of thought. Consequently, when I shall have acquired enough ordinary knowledge to impart, during my life, to little boys, I must be content. I shall then have my share of knowledge. This is a very contracted and small ambition. But for a man like me, who has not in his heart energy enough to produce a simple will-o'-the-wisp of passion, and who, in the matter of intellect, has just enough to cause an unproductive excitement, is not the little, the best,—that little which suffices to relieve from want his material life? And for the rest, one may set about canvassing men and things leisurely, contentedly, with a little dreaming, if one wishes, but with the consciousness of a profound ignorance of the impenetrable destiny which impels us.

April 3d.—The moral expanse which my life embraces, is like a desert under a colorless, immovable sky, without variation of seasons. Its temperature is sufficiently warm to have induced a certain fermentation in the fertile soil: but, as it preserves eternally the same degree of temperature, the vital sap, excited and warmed to a corresponding point, can mount no further, and finds itself likewise forced to ferment without fruit and without rest, like the water which bubbles incessantly, without raising or lowering its murmur, by the constant heat of a small fire. The result for me is a continued, subtle, and obstinate suffering. Eager, restless, seeing imperfectly, my soul is touched by all the ills which a youth, never destined to pass into manhood, is sure to engender. I grow old, and exhaust myself in transports of soul so ordinary, in passions of intellect so paltry, all that stirs in me makes so little progress, and what cannot move reveals itself so slowly, that better a hundred times I had received a mind blind and paralytic. My malady, at first quite confined, has gained rapidly. Like a disease which spreads in the blood, to-day it appears everywhere, and under the strangest developments. My head is parching. Like a tree which has lived its life, I feel as though every passing wind were blowing through dead branches in my top. Work is insupportable to me, or rather impossible. Mental application begets in me, not sleep, but an irritable and nervous disgust, which carries me, I know not whither, into the streets and public places. The spring, whose blessings used every year to seek me in my haunts, and charm me with gradual and stealthy approaches, this year, overpowers me with a load of sudden heat. Life descends not from the sky in the freshness of the nights, nor is it dispensed in the drops of the

showers, nor diffused and held in solution through the wide expanse of the air; it falls from on high like a weight.

I wish something would happen, to take me out of the position in which I am. If I were free, I would embark for some country where I should be obliged to form new habits.

8*th*.—My brain is dry. The pain I suffer in my head is half moral, half physical. Some days I feel a dull pain, as if the nerves were knotting themselves with remorseless contractions. Excess of cold or heat, weariness, certain movements of the head, irritation of mind, contribute to this feeling. At such times, intellection ceases. A strange stupor seizes me, I remain motionless, feeling nothing but the heavy, overwhelming fixedness of life, (which seems to halt in a state of inexplicable misery,) and the fluttering of an artery in that part of my head.

30*th*.—When suffering has departed, and you are left with your pale, enfeebled life, still trusting, however, and tasting a grateful calm, as the last twinges of pain are hushed, the most self-contained soul has a yearning for conversation, prolonged, rambling in topic, and mingled both with painful memories and the thousand, smiling projects of hope. The first gleam of comfort which dawns upon the life, penetrates, laden with soothing dreams, and soft, vague images, like so many atoms, floating in its radiant bosom. This state is dearer to the soul than health. At these moments, from many a nook in my soul, as in the peaceful fields, beneath a grayish sky, when the clouds are still, rise faint murmurs, tokens of the life which returns from afar. These murmurs are produced by my thoughts, which, issuing

from their painful torpor, make a light movement of timid joy, and begin a discourse full of memories or hopes. At other times, slower to waken, I hear within me, during these hours of calm, only muffled and infrequent rustlings, as when, among the high branches of a forest, a flock of birds are going to sleep. To-day, relieved from all sense of oppression, my thoughts talk connectedly and calmly of sorrows endured and overcome. They await life, the future, the arrival of the successive mysteries of existence, fortifying each other by the eloquence of private communings, or, hushed at intervals, they listen to the bubbling flow of that inner philosophy which, like those streams which used to pour through the cloisters, courses under the surface of some lives.

The greater part of those faculties which constitute strength of mind, are either wanting in me, or exist only in the germ, as the dead or unproductive nodes on trees mark where branches should put forth. To classify, to compare, to draw conclusions, are for me operations of such moment, consuming so rapidly the forces of my intellect, that, even if all original impulse of mind does not thereby come to naught, the power which remains for it is rendered nearly useless. When I wish to connect one truth with another, I am like a man who, with a half-paralyzed arm, exerts himself to fasten two things together: the arm rises with great difficulty, hesitates, trembles, and always misses its mark. Any quantity of causes, in my internal and external nature, early inclined me to introspection. My own soul was my first horizon. Long, long have I been studying it. I see ascending from the depth of my being, vapors which rise from it, as from a deep valley, and which assume

form only at the breath of chance; indescribable phantoms, which make their ascent slowly and without cessation. That powerful fascination exercised over the soul's vision, as over the bodily organs of sight, by the monotonous and uninterrupted passage of any trifling thing that stirs, possesses me, and does not allow my eyes to turn one moment from their pageant.

I get my living by the help of the little Latin which the college put into my head, and which has somehow survived there. The routine of the recitations, a variety of tasks, occupy the greater part of my day. Absorption in material cares occasions me great loss; the stream of my life runs to waste in the sands. I am left almost with no reserved force, in this immense usurpation, by the cares of daily subsistence, of the time due to thought, and I foresee that in my life I shall always be obliged to cast this divine part of me as a prey to cruel necessity. I keep telling myself, indeed, that the moment will come, when we shall begin to think in the assured calm of eternity; but from now until then, the rule must be to suffer, to waste oneself in cares for the sake of future gains; to deprive the mind of much, in order to buy for it a position among men, (God save the mark! I might better call them strangers,) a position whose activity is, in a manner, insupportable, whose level is disheartening; this is a great agony of soul, which reverses strangely the meaning of that word, life.

May 7th.—You suffer to-day from the unexpressed sense of poetry which fills your being. This suffering is terrible, but so beautiful! Be comforted by the noble and rare nature of your tortures: there are so many men who suffer as much as you from positive miseries! Your grief is of a privileged sort; what more would you have here below?

That which every man of a certain nature, rather lonely than superior, guards with the utmost vigilance, is the secret of his soul, and of the inmost habits of his thought. I love that god Harpocrates, with finger on lip.

14*th.*—Who can call himself sheltered, if he be not upon some height, and that the most absolute that he can climb? For some time have I been looking toward those temples of serene wisdom which ancient philosophy has reared on very high summits, and to which only a small number attained. If I could but win those heights! When shall I be at peace? Formerly, the gods, wishing to reward the virtue of certain mortals, caused to spring up about them a vegetable nature, which, as it grew, absorbed in its embrace their aged bodies, and substituted for their life, worn out by extreme age, the strong and silent life, which holds sway under the bark of the oak. These mortals having become motionless, rested, except as the wind stirred their branching tops. Is not this the sage, and his calm? Does he not, after a long time, assume this metamorphosis of the few men who were beloved by the gods? To subsist by a strength chosen by oneself from the elements, to be enveloped in it, to appear to men firmly rooted, and stolidly indifferent, like the great trunks of certain trees that one admires in the forests, haply to utter only such vague but deep sounds as those of some tufted tree-tops, which imitate the murmurs of the sea—this is a condition of life which seems to me worthy of effort, and well suited to oppose against men and the fortune of the day.

June 4th.—Why am I saddened to such a degree, by the sight of indifferent productions? I never chance to open a book of the class of that which we looked

through yesterday, without bringing away from it painful thoughts, and a depressed imagination. Is it a sorrowful pity for this spectacle—one of the saddest that I know—of impotent vanity? or is it rather consciousness, and a recoil upon myself? However it may be, what matter? The beauty of human life does not consist in the strivings of the intellect. There must be great mediocrity of soul, to be unable to endure that of the mind. I understand all that, and yet languish in making weak attempts. My God, what moral education is given now-a-days? I am twenty-five years old, of which ten were passed in the schools, and I have not yet opened the rudiments of interior strength, and of the culture of the moral sense! Never has a word been uttered to me of the greatness of the soul. It was only yesterday, that, an old child, I began to have an insight into man, but at a vast distance, and upon those serene heights which are hardly attainable by a foot already feeble. With an inveterate deficiency, and all impotent from lamentable habits of thought, I drag myself along, and mark my way with suffering. But yet I understand, yet I see, and if I do not attain to the moral beauty of my days, I shall, at least, die with my eyes fixed upon it. There is, however, in me a very grievous sign: it is, that each day I find myself hardly in advance of the actions of the day before, and that my soul seems to remain at the level of the same actions, actions already remote in the past. My mind, on the contrary, soon sees all its performances growing old. What happiness to surmount one's past, and what joy there is in being able to disdain oneself from day to day in one's actions! What a destiny, if I am to remain coeternal with myself in the moral state which I occupy at this moment!

5*th*.—My God, how wearisome is life! Not in its accidents—a little philosophy suffices for that; but in itself, in its essence, aside from all phenomena. I increase in years, my mind lets drop in its path a thousand spoils, ties are severed, prejudices are dethroned, I begin to show my head above the waves; but existence itself remains entangled: always the same painful point marking the centre of the circumference. Is there any philosophy, are there any rules which apply to this evil? I know less and less of this depth of life, and what one must do in it. O, philosophy of the Porch, instituted to war against grief by strength and steadiness of soul, thou knewest how to oppose life only with death, and we have advanced no further than thou!

12*th*.—I do not commit my wicked actions impetuously. There are in the depth of my nature, I know not what waters, dead and deadly, like that deep pond in which perished the poet Sténio.

22*d*.—What makes me, at times, despair of myself, is the intensity of my suffering on slight grounds, and the exercise, always misjudged and blind, of my moral forces. I use, sometimes, to roll grains of sand, an energy capable of forcing a rock to the summit of a mountain. I could bear enormous burdens, better than this light and almost intangible dust which clings to me. I die daily in secret; my life flows out by invisible pin-pricks. I was told, not long ago, that a contempt for men would lead me far; yes, especially if bitterness mingle with it. My surroundings weary me; I know not where I would like to live, nor in what profession; but I detest mine, which spoils me, and makes me miserable. It makes me part company, at every moment, with the little philosophy that I have gained in free and

thoughtful hours; it irritates me against men who seem yet children. How I hate myself in these miseries, and what violent longings take possession of me to spring upon a free shore, spurning with my foot the detested bark which has borne my burden!

July 11th.—Which is the true God? The God of cities, or the God of the deserts? To which shall I turn? Tastes long fostered, impulses of the heart, the accidents of life, decide the choice. We bear within us a thousand fatalities. What do we know of what urges us on, and which is the best among all these things? The dweller in cities ridicules in secret the lonely dreams of the solitary; the latter glories in his life of isolation, like the islands of the great ocean, far from continents, and washed by waves unknown. The most to be pitied are those who, tossed between these two contradictions, stretch out their arms towards both.

October 13th.—I have been travelling. I know not what impulse of destiny bore me along the banks of the river to the sea. I saw all along this river plains, where Nature is rich and gay, royal and ancient dwellings, scored with memories which have their place in the sad legend of humanity, numerous cities, and, at the end, the roaring ocean. Thence I went back into the interior, to the land of great forests, where the noises of another vast plain abound unceasingly. I experienced fatigues, which I shall enjoy long and vividly in the retrospect, in crossing the great open plains, in scaling horizon after horizon, revelling in space, and obtaining many times during the day those impressions which spring up from every quarter, in passing through new stretches of country, and swarm around and overpower the traveller. The stream of travel is very sweet. * * * Oh! who shall set me adrift upon this Nile? * * *

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